

## **Told in gallant deeds, a child's history of the war,**

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# TOLD IN GALLANT DEEDS

A CHILD'S HISTORY OF THE WAR



M<sup>RS</sup>. BELLOC LOWNDES



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# **TOLD IN GALLANT DEEDS**









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*Le River.  
The Soldiers' Dream.*

# A CHILD'S STORY OF THE WAR

BY  
MRS. BELLOC LOWNDES

London

22 BERNERS STREET, W.





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**DEDICATED TO  
THE HAPPY WARRIOR**



## CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he  
That every man in arms should wish to be?  
It is the generous spirit, who, when brought  
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought  
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought;  
Whose high endeavours are an inward light  
That makes the path before him always bright:  
Who, with a natural instinct to discern  
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;  
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,  
But makes his moral being his prime care;  
Who, doomed to go in company with pain,  
And fear and bloodshed, miserable train!  
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;

. . . . .  
Whom neither shape nor danger can dismay,  
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;  
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,  
Looks forward, persevering to the last,  
From well to better, daily self-surpassed:  
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth  
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,  
Or he must go to dust without his fame,  
And leave a dead unprofitable name,  
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;  
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws  
His breath in confidence of heaven's applause:  
This is the happy warrior; this is he  
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

WORDSWORTH.

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## PREFACE

**T**HE great war will leave more than a deep mark on our country ; when it is over, there will be a different England, a different Scotland, a different Ireland. Grown-up people will always remember vividly the old, happy, peaceful, confiding England, as she was before her placid contentment was rudely shattered in a night.

But what of the children ? There are thousands and thousands of little children who will look back all their lives to this war as their first important recollection, the first impact on their minds of the great world of realities lying outside all childish things. It will not be possible to keep from them the knowledge of many horrors and savage brutalities, and it is therefore the more necessary that there should be shown to them as soon as possible the other and glorious side of the shield. It is the more necessary that for our children, through the long years that lie before them, the memory of the Great War should be touched to noble issues—that it should be, first and foremost, a memory of deeds as gallant as any that have

ever been inscribed in Christendom's long roll of honour.

There can hardly be one British child whose little world of personal affections and interests has not been roughly disturbed by the war. Many have seen their fathers and brothers going off to fight, and to many those dear fathers and brothers will never come back. Even the children who have no kindred in the Navy or Army have friends who have gone out. In every village familiar faces are missed, and some will never be seen again. In every town, great and small, it is the same—this new and disturbing sense of personal loss.

In this book the writer has endeavoured to show by force of contrast that savagery and brutality are not of the essence of war. The Happy Warrior is to be found in all ranks and in all armies, and it is an inspiring thought that, for every brave deed the record of which has leapt to light, there must be ten others of which the stirring story will never be known.

Every intelligent child must have gradually become aware that this great war illustrates the enormously increased havoc that may now be wrought by various scientific engines of destruction. But it is the object of the writer to demonstrate that the personal valour of

officers and men remains the ultimately decisive factor. Man can never devise a more marvellous war machine than himself. All through the ages we see that battles are really won, not by improvements in weapons of precision, but by the unquenchable spirit of the individual soldiers and sailors who wield them.

The writer has, wherever possible, linked on each tale of heroism to one like it in the annals of past wars. This serves to bring out what is perhaps the most splendid lesson of the present gigantic struggle, namely that the soldiers and sailors of the present day are indeed the worthy successors of the heroes of the past.

The writer has also drawn on the treasures of the older English poetry with which some modern children are not too well acquainted. It is her experience that children instinctively respond to the best in literature, and also that lines which to their elders may seem hackneyed keep all their old power to thrill and uplift the young imagination.

Moreover, Belgium and France are rich in historic and literary associations, and the writer has ventured to refer to books such as *Tristram Shandy*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Villette*, which children ought to know about now, and to read when they are older.

As to the sources from which the deeds of valour and of chivalry recounted are taken, they range from the brilliant, highly literate accounts written by war correspondents to extracts taken from the wonderfully vivid and picturesque narratives contained in letters written home to mothers and wives by soldiers and sailors just after the actions described.

To all these unknown helpers to whom the best part of her book is due, the writer tenders her grateful thanks.

# TOLD IN GALLANT DEEDS

## CHAPTER I

### BELGIUM

“Now tell us what ’twas all about,”  
Young Peterkin, he cries.  
And little Wilhelmine looks up  
With wonder-waiting eyes ;  
“Now tell us all about the war,  
And what they fought each other for?”

**L**IKE the children in Mr. Southey’s poem, you will want to know first of all why we joined in with France and Russia in the great war against Germany and Austria. Well, the answer in a word is—Belgium.

Supposing you had solemnly promised to protect a little kitten and afterwards a big dog came and attacked the kitten, would you not keep your promise, and do all you could to help the kitten? Of course you would. Belgium was the kitten, and Germany was the big dog.

A



We had faithfully promised to protect the little country of Belgium, and the terrible thing is that Germany had promised too, but she broke her promise.

Germany wanted to get into France.

If you look at the map, you will see that the Germans might have tried to go straight in without touching Belgium. Only then they would have had to break through a very strong line of forts which the French had built to defend their country. The Germans did not feel sure of doing this, and they said to themselves, "The longest way round is the shortest way in." That meant going through Belgium.

You have probably heard grown-up people, when discussing this great war, mention "a scrap of paper." You may even have wondered what a scrap of paper could have to do with the war. I will tell you. On the dread day when our mighty country threw down the gauntlet, the German statesman who had worked hard to keep England out of Germany's quarrel with France and Russia exclaimed, "You are going to war for a scrap of paper!" He spoke truly, but on that scrap of paper

or parchment was written the solemn promise of both England and Germany to be like big brothers to Belgium and protect her from being bullied.

At first the Germans were very nice to Belgium. They said, "Only let us come through your country, and when we have conquered France we will give you a splendid reward!" But France also had promised to be a big brother to Belgium, and so Belgium said "No!"

England also said "No!" England said to Germany, "If you touch our little friend Belgium, we will fight you."

So that is why the British Empire went to war with Germany. If we had chosen the easy way of breaking our promise by simply doing nothing, by standing out and merely looking on at the awful struggle, would we now be proud of being English? I think not.

Germany did more than break her promise to protect Belgium. When she found that the brave little country was gamely going to fight, she sent her great



armies, hundreds of thousands of trained soldiers with fleets of aeroplanes and terrible big guns, whose shells, as they are now called, could kill people miles away. She thought she would easily be able to march through Belgium right into France, and she fully expected to capture the city of Paris—all in one month !

In fact, Germany made the worst mistake that can be made in war—the mistake of despising her enemies. She despised the power of the French armies, and she also very much despised the British Army. She had a good deal of respect for the British Navy because it is big, but because the British Army was small she thought it did not matter. Well, she was taught a richly-deserved lesson by Sir John French and his splendid troops, of whose gallant deeds you will read in this book.

Most of all, Germany despised the army of poor little Belgium. And yet the game little kitten, though suffering terribly herself, contrived to inflict some severe scratches on the big German dog. She actually held him up for quite a long time, to his great surprise and rage, and that delay was of the utmost benefit both to France and to England. It enabled them to make their

final preparations for serious fighting, and it gave us time to send our Army across the Channel to join up with the French forces.

Notice, also, that it would have been very useful to France to send her armies through Belgium to attack Germany. What prevented her? Just "a scrap of paper," just her pledge and promise. She could not break her word, because it would not have been playing fair, it would have been taking a mean advantage—the same mean advantage that Germany did not hesitate to take.

But you may ask, "Why did not the French at least send plenty of soldiers to defend Belgium?" The answer is that they did offer to send more than 200,000 men. But Belgium refused. She believed that Germany would keep her written promise. "Can the Kaiser put his name to a lie?" she asked.

Terribly did Belgium suffer for her trust in German honour. But once she saw her trust was betrayed, her little army fought with splendid courage, thousands of Germans were killed in the first battles, and thanks to the splendid defence put up by the forts of a Belgian

town called Liège, she delayed the vast, oncoming German hosts till Britain and France were ready to take them on.

## II

I am sure all of you are now familiar with the glorious name of Liège, but you may not know so well that of the hero whose name is now linked for ever with that of Liège—I mean General Leman, who conducted the splendid defence.

The flower of the German Army was hurled against the city and the forts and thirty thousand Belgians fought like lions repulsing the enemy. Great deeds of individual valour were done, and a special interest attaches to them as they were the first gallant deeds of this Great War.

Here is the story of a young soldier whose name is inscribed for ever on the Belgian roll of honour.

I must tell you that waterways, almost always very beautiful and picturesque waterways, play a great part in the life of Belgium, and much fierce fighting has gone

on, as we shall see, on the banks of rivers, canals, and streams. In order to cut off the enemy, it became all important to the Belgians to cross a canal, but the bridge was up, and the mechanism was on the side held by the Germans.

A young soldier, named Tresignies, facing certain death, dived into the stream, and swam across under the German fire. He leapt up the bank of the stream, got hold of the pulley, and so lowered the bridge; but as it fell in place, he himself fell dead.

The days went on, and still Liège held out amid terrible scenes of bloodshed and heroism. Outside the forts the Belgians were not idle. Fiercely they fought the enemy, and the Germans on their side were full of pluck and of determination to conquer or die.

A fort is always built on the top of a hill or huge mound. Up the slopes of each fort the Germans advanced again and again, under a withering fire, and it was said that eight hundred men were killed within an half mile square. If valour could have taken the forts during those early days of the siege, Liège would have fallen. According to an eye-witness who has seen much of the



actual fighting during the war, the enemy never fought so well as at Liège. But the enemy had a foe worthy of its steel.

An exciting and heartening incident of the fighting round Liège was the capture by a brave Belgian boy of a German general.

A day may come when some of you British boys and girls will understand why grown-up people smile when they note that this boy's name is Jean Jacques Rousseau. For Jean Jacques Rousseau was also the name of one who, if a great thinker and writer, was not, in a physical sense, a brave man ; indeed, so vivid was the original Jean Jacques Rousseau's wonderful imagination, and so poor his courage, that he would probably have fainted with fright had he been vouchsafed a vision of his namesake's gallant and daring deed !

The brave Jean Jacques Rousseau is only nineteen, yet he had already been a soldier for three years when at Zelk, close to Liège, he succeeded in making this officer of high rank his prisoner. The German general seems to have put up very little fight ; tamely he surrendered to his

captor a satchel containing not only papers, but six thousand pounds in notes and gold ! Jean Jacques handed over the money to the Red Cross, for its noble work of tending the wounded, but he was allowed to keep the satchel, and the General's silver helmet.

When the Germans found they could not take Liège by what is called a frontal attack—that is by an attack from the front—they brought up their huge siege guns.

Now here I must stop to tell you about these guns. They were the first surprise of the War, for their construction was kept a profound secret by Germany, who with their help believed herself invincible ! It is suspected by some people that these new siege guns were to be kept hidden till the enemy wished to strike terror into the defenders of the huge forts which guard Paris. If that be so, then the gallant defence put up by Liège forced the German generals to alter their plan, for as soon as they found they could not take the Belgian stronghold by assault, they dragged up seven huge guns—it takes thirty-five pairs of horses to drag one along—and began battering the Liège forts to pieces !

Soon the Fort of Loncin, where the brave General Leman had his headquarters, was entirely isolated. Each man, however, went on with his work calmly and courageously, and that even when the bombardment was so terrible that many were made—we must hope only temporarily—stone deaf.

One afternoon, just as General Leman and his staff were hastily drinking a cup of tea, a terrific explosion shook the whole fort, and a moment later its concrete walls collapsed in a cloud of flame and dust. Many were killed outright ; those who survived had the anguish of seeing the enemy rush in.

In the midst of a scene of frightful horror and confusion the Germans sought with frantic eagerness for General Leman. Soon they found him, but at first they thought he was dead. He was, however, breathing, and so, still unconscious, he was placed on a stretcher and taken out of the ruins of the fort he had defended so gloriously.

There then occurred a fine little incident, and one to the credit of the enemy. At the end of a gallery of which the sides were still standing, were gathered together all that was left of the garrison. Black with powder, their

faces streaked with blood, their clothes in ribbons, their hands clasping shattered rifles, the heroic little group, some twenty-five men, still stood to resist. Touched by such splendid courage, the Germans, instead of attacking, flung aside their weapons and ran to the help of the brave Belgian soldiers. Of the five hundred men who formed the garrison of Fort Loncin three hundred and fifty were killed and more than a hundred were seriously wounded.

Meanwhile General Leman had recovered consciousness. He had sworn never to be taken alive, but Fate had proved too strong for him ! He was accordingly brought before General von Emmich, the Commander of the German forces. Sadly the Defender of Liège tendered his sword ; but the German general handed it back to him, and, bowing courteously, congratulated General Leman very warmly on the splendid way in which he had conducted the defence.

This example of German magnanimity recalls a French incident of the kind which happened rather more than a hundred years ago. Lord Cochrane, commanding his little British brig, the *Speedy*, was captured by the huge *Desaix*. Admiral Linois, who lives in history as the best

of Napoleon's naval commanders, refused, when Cochrane had to surrender, to take his sword. "I cannot," he cried, "take the sword of a man so brave that he has been doing the impossible for twelve hours!" This was an allusion to the fact that though three huge French battleships had all attacked the *Speedy* together, her commander, by brilliant seamanship, had actually managed to elude capture for a whole day.

General Leman, on being made prisoner, sent a very touching letter to the King of the Belgians :

"Your Majesty will learn with grief that Fort Loncin was blown up yesterday at 5.20 P.M., the greater part of the garrison being buried under the ruins.

"That I did not lose my life in that catastrophe is due to my escort, who drew me from a stronghold whilst I was being suffocated by gas from the exploded powder. I was conveyed to a trench, where I fell. A German captain gave me drink, and I was made prisoner and taken to Liège.

"In honour of our arms I have surrendered neither the fortress nor the forts.

"Deign pardon, Sire. In Germany, where I am proceeding, my thoughts will be, as they always have been,

of Belgium and the King. I would willingly have given my life the better to serve them, but death was not granted to me.

“ Lieutenant-General LEMAN.”

It was a happy and a graceful act on the part of the French Government to bestow the Legion of Honour on the town of Liège, which, as was well said in the decree setting forth the honour, “ was called upon to bear the first brunt of the German troops, and kept the invading army in check in a struggle which was as unequal as it was heroic.”

Every soldier worthy of the name not only respects, but heartily admires, a gallant, magnanimous foe. Had there been even a few German commanders like General von Emmich, there would not now rest, as there will do till the Day of Judgment, an indelible stain on Germany's name.

It is awful to have to put on record that after the fall of Liège the enemy, maddened by the unexpected resistance, took a fearful vengeance on poor little Belgium.

As they marched through the lovely, peaceful villages, and charming, storied towns, which all other invaders had

spared even in the so-called dark ages, the Germans burnt, blew up, and destroyed far and wide, killing even women and children in their ruthlessness. Yet even so, these unarmed Belgians performed wonderful deeds of valour.

When the enemy approached Heristal, the Belgian Woolwich, where is the National Arms Factory, the town was defended against the German attack by the women, for all the men were already away fighting.

These wives and mothers swore that the enemy should never take the factory. They armed themselves with revolvers and other weapons, and actually repulsed several charges of the Uhlans. When their ammunition was exhausted, they barricaded themselves in various houses and poured boiling water on the Germans. Children and old men shared in the defence, and for two days the Belgian colours still floated over the factory buildings.

There is scarcely a village, and there is no town, in Belgium which has not some glorious page of history to its credit, and some precious survival of the Middle Ages in the shape of a noble old church or town hall. Only the glorious pages of history now remain. But these



have been added to, for as a brave Frenchwoman once finely phrased it, "Le plomb ne tue pas l'idée," which may be freely translated, "Bullets can only kill the body."

The storied monuments alas ! which belonged not only to generous little Belgium, but to the whole world, are gone. Battered, shattered, in many cases razed to the ground, by German lead, which, though powerless to kill the mind, has been able to destroy the sanctified beauty which the genius of artists and of saints had created with such happy labour and prayers.

It is a pathetic and even an awesome thing to have to say of any place—even of a tiny village—"it was, and is no longer." That, unhappily, is what we now have to say of the venerable and beautiful town of Louvain—the Oxford of Belgium. Spared by innumerable armies, by the fighting men of a thousand years, it fell victim to one stupid barbarian, who, I suppose, still imagines himself to be an officer and a gentleman. His name is given as Manteuffel, and it is a curious irony of fate that the destroyer of one of the oldest homes of learning in Europe should bear a name honoured by all classical scholars.

This German commander, angered by a report, which seems to have been quite false, that some of the inhabitants of the town had fired when they saw their dread enemy approaching, ordered his soldiers to set fire, deliberately and systematically, to the houses and public buildings of a town which, to all lovers of the beautiful and to every scholar in the old and the new world, had become a shrine, a place of joyful pilgrimage.

Till this summer there actually remained at Louvain a fragment of what had once been Cæsar's Castle, and this survival of Roman days was of special interest to English people, for Edward III and his queen lived in the Castle for a winter. That great Emperor, Charles V, and his sister also, were scholars at Louvain, their teacher there being a priest who afterwards became Pope Adrian VI.

Heroic deeds were performed by some of the citizens of Louvain. Take the case of Dr. Noyons, who happened at the time to be Principal of the Medical Faculty of the University. On the very day the German Army approached the town, he suddenly learned that a hundred wounded were to be brought in. Beds were hurriedly got ready, and Dr. Noyons and his wife, as well as a large

staff, were in attendance. This was at mid-day, and the wounded kept arriving all the afternoon.

At seven o'clock the firing of the town began ! By eight o'clock the famous library was in flames !

Dr. Noyons' own house, though it contained a number of wounded and had the Red Cross flag on the door, was now set on fire. But all night long the professor and his wife went on attending on the wounded, and when, the next morning, they were informed they must leave the town, in order that it might be razed to the ground by big guns, this noble-hearted couple at once decided to remain with those of the wounded (many of them Germans) who were too much injured to be moved.

Helped by a few trusted assistants, they carried their unhappy patients into the cellars of the hospital, and then they remained waiting for two days for a bombardment which fortunately never came. At the end of that time, this brave steadfast pair — a hero and heroine of a rare and splendid type—brought the wounded up again to the wards, and calmly continued to look after them.

B

Quite as awful as the fate of Louvain was that of the pretty town of Termonde. But there also splendid deeds of heroism were performed by quite simple folk.

Four times early in the War was unhappy Termonde bombarded, and twice it was deliberately set ablaze. But there were wounded there all through, and the Burgo-master and his two daughters never left the town. The two girls—the elder seventeen, and her sister a year younger—stayed at their posts as voluntary nurses, brave and fearless, thinking of nothing but their duty to the wounded.

The name of Termonde will now be for ever associated with the wicked and brutal conduct of the German Army. But before this last invasion of Belgium, Termonde was famed as having been the scene of all sorts of romantic incidents. Louis XIV, the stateliest of the great French kings, was very nearly drowned there, for the country round the town, like that of Holland, can be flooded at will. When the Sun King (as Louis XIV was nicknamed) was told that Marlborough was about to besiege Termonde, he observed: "He will have to bring an army of ducks to take it!" But Marlborough had the

good luck to be there at a time of terrible drought, and so the brave garrison had to surrender.

Malines, or Mechlin as we ought to call it, was also the scene of one of the fiercest fights, and suffered greatly from the enemy. The beautiful little town was splendidly defended by the brave Belgians, but after two days' battle they had to retire. Mechlin is famous, not only for its exquisite lace, but also for its peal of bells, and this, grievous to say, was destroyed by a German shell. Robert Browning, in a poem which I expect many of you know by heart, "How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix," wrote :

"And from Mechlin church steeple we heard  
the half chime."

But, tragic as was the fate of Mechlin, its most treasured relic was saved ! This, amusing to relate, is a curious doll which bears the odd name of Op-Signoorke. This doll is said to have been modelled from a dwarf who was the official jester of a famous Antwerp club in the sixteenth century. In those days, every king and many a great noble had his dwarf, a kind of human toy who often played a considerable part in the life of his master.

The story goes that at a time when there was a great deal of friendly rivalry between the Flemish towns, Mechlin boasted of a wonderful dwarf jester who could out-talk and outwit any of his rivals. One of the Antwerp Guilds was much annoyed at this, and when the next meeting took place, it suddenly produced a new dwarf jester named Klaasken, who beat the Mechlin dwarf at his own game !

Soon afterwards Klaasken died, and when the next contest was held the good folk of Antwerp produced a wonderful model of him, beautifully carved and splendidly dressed. The Mechlin people, incensed at this insult to their live dwarf, carried him off one dark night, when the doll was left unguarded. Op-Signoorke, as he was then re-christened, remained at Mechlin, and ever since, on the occasion of the annual Kermesse, he is hung out for all to see from a window of the town hall. Now when it was known that the Germans were close to the town, a wise alderman put Op-Signoorke in a bomb-proof shelter, where he will repose till poor Belgium comes into her own again.

Shakespeare's line in *Julius Cæsar*, " Let slip the dogs of war," has a practical meaning in this war. Both the

French and the German armies are accompanied to the front by war dogs ; *les chiens militaires* and *die Kriegshunde*, as they are respectively called, are trained to act as scouts, carry despatches, and they even help, as we shall see later on, to succour the wounded. In Belgium dogs do much of the work performed in other countries by horses, and during some of the more recent fights the smaller pieces of artillery were actually harnessed to dog teams.

And now we must leave brave Belgium for a while, though later in this book you will hear of many gallant deeds and romantic happenings, as well as much that is piteous and terrible, concerning that country which for hundreds of years has been called " The Cockpit of Europe."

But there is much, even as I write, that goes to show that Belgium's day of ordeal is drawing to a close, and to her we may say that as long as Britain, France, and Russia endure :

" There's not a breathing of the common wind  
That will forget thee : thou hast great allies :  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."



## CHAPTER II

### THE WHITE ENSIGN

I saw fierce Prussia's chargers stand,  
Her children's sharp swords out ;  
Proud Austria's bright spurs streaming red  
When rose the closing shout ;  
But soon the steeds rushed masterless,  
By tower and town and wood ;  
For lordly France her fiery youth  
Poured o'er them like a flood.  
Go, hew the gold spurs from your heels,  
And let your steeds run free ;  
Then come to our unconquered decks,  
And learn to reign at sea.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

**A**FTER the War broke out, a wise man declared  
that every British child ought to say this grace  
before meat :

“ Thank God for my good dinner and for the British  
Navy.”

Perhaps you will wonder why he put the dinner and the Navy together in this way. It is because British children during the war owed their dinners, and all their other meals also, to the Navy. This may sound strange, but it is perfectly true. The Navy guarded the thousands of merchant ships which bring us food and other things from abroad.

We do not grow nearly enough corn at home to feed everybody, so we have to buy from Canada, America, and other countries. The German Navy would have liked to capture the ships which brought us this corn, but owing to the British Navy it could not do so.

But that is not all that the British Navy did.

I have told you how the Germans invaded Belgium and there were terrible fighting and ravaging, in which not only soldiers but also women and children were killed. Well, the Germans were even more angry with Britain than with Belgium. They would have dearly liked to send over hundreds of thousands of soldiers in big ships to land on the east coast of England, perhaps at Cromer, or Hunstanton, or Felixstowe, or other

places where children often go for their summer holidays.

In our next chapter you will hear of how Napoleon waited impatiently at Boulogne in the hope of swooping down on England. There is a tradition in Dorsetshire that he did come secretly just to see what stretch of shore on that lonely coast would be most suitable for a landing of troops. This tradition or old belief is embodied in a wonderful short story by Mr. Thomas Hardy..

What would the German soldiers have done to us if they had landed? I am afraid they would have treated us even worse than they treated Belgium. The whole countryside would have been laid waste with fire and sword, and thousands of innocent people might have been killed.

Be thankful that England was not invaded like that. Be thankful that, while the poor Belgians were being bullied and beaten down, we could all sleep safely in our beds.

You know why that was. We owed our safety entirely to the strong arm of our Navy. All round our shores,

day and night, our gallant tars were watching, watching. And the ships full of German soldiers could not think of coming. Our Navy would have blown them to pieces if they had tried.

Still, it was a terribly anxious time for Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and the brave officers and men under him. Many accidents can happen at sea which could not happen on land, and the whole Fleet knew well that the Germans might make a dash for it, and perhaps land a small force of men after all.

The portraits of Sir John Jellicoe show him as a man with a very strong face and a determined mouth and chin, but the expression of his eyes is full of kindness.

He earned his great position by sheer hard work. When he was a naval cadet, he took three firsts, and won a prize of £80 as well at the Royal Naval College. Afterwards, he studied naval guns and the art of firing them.

Admiral Jellicoe is one of the officers of the Royal Navy who have received the Board of Trade medal for gallantry in saving life at sea. He himself, too, has been saved from drowning at sea, for he was in command of

the Victoria which was rammed by the Camperdown twenty-one years ago ; in fact, he was one of the very few who were saved in that terrible disaster.

Quite early in the war, a bluejacket of H.M.S. Zealandia, the fine battleship which was given to the Mother Country by the great Dominion of New Zealand, wrote a poem called " The Walls of Jellicoe."

He sent it to his aunt, and she, aunt-like, was so pleased with it that she sent it to a paper! There I read it, and I thought it so good and so true that I cut it out. Here are the verses I like best. But I like them all.

" On the flagship's bridge a man  
Takes a long and quiet scan  
Of a certain bit of coastline lying east,  
Vaterland.

And it's him who has to think  
How to get your food and drink  
And likewise how to save you from  
' The Beast.'

. . . . .

There's no one by to say  
' Can I lend a hand, J. J. ? '  
There's no one near to treat him  
Like a friend.

He's the loneliest man at sea,  
And thank God it isn't me ;  
But you are safe while he is  
Keeping up his end.

He's Admiralissimo,  
Which is Johnny Jellicoe,  
And I hope you'll breathe his name in all your  
prayers,  
And don't forget.

For he's you and me and all,  
And if his old walls fall,  
Earth would close for alterations and repairs,  
Burn the map ! ”

This sailor poet expresses in his homely way the exact truth. Admiral Jellicoe had indeed a good many things to think about ; and while he was keeping his ceaseless watch in the North Sea he had the grief of hearing

that his old father, a seaman like himself, had died in the Isle of Wight. He could not be at his father's death-bed ; he could not follow his father's coffin to the burial. His place was at the post of duty and of danger.

I have said that in the first months of the war the German Fleet would not come out from under the shelter of the German fortress guns. But you must not think that its commander, Admiral von Ingemohl, a very gallant seaman, was content to do nothing. He counted on taking some of our ships by surprise, and so making matters more equal before having a regular big battle. But as we shall see, he found that Admiral Jellicoe could play at that game too.

## II

The Germans may be said to have drawn first blood at sea.

Very early in the war, in fact on the very day that most people knew our country was at war, on August 5, 1914, H.M.S. Amphion, while searching for the mine-layer Königin Luise, was blown up, whether by a mine or a torpedo will probably never be known.

Here I must explain that a mine at sea is a large rounded metal box full of stuff that blows up when a ship bumps against it. These mines are laid a little under the surface of the water. As for a torpedo, it is a long thing shaped like a fish, with a motor in its tail. It is also loaded with stuff to blow up, and it can be fired at an enemy's ship from a submarine or from a torpedo boat. The motor in its tail makes it travel very fast under water, and if it hits a ship it is almost certain to destroy her.

When the *Amphion* bumped on a mine, or was hit by a torpedo, a sheet of flame enveloped the bridge and rendered her commander, Captain Fox, insensible. Soon he recovered consciousness and he ran instantly to the engine-room to stop the engines. But the good ship's back was broken, and she was already settling down by the bows. At once efforts were made to place the wounded in safety, but by the time some destroyers came up the *Amphion* had to be abandoned.

The crew lined up in perfect discipline, everything was done without any confusion, and twenty minutes after the blow, was first struck, all the men and most of the officers had left the ship. It was well they did so, for



three minutes afterwards came another explosion, blowing up the whole forepart.

Discipline is one of the finest words in our language, and it is one we share with our French Allies, for although the word is pronounced a little differently in French, it is written exactly the same.

What is discipline? Discipline is composed of two human qualities which, if they appear to have very little to do with one another, are yet often allied. These qualities are obedience and courage.

The finest example of discipline in the history of the British Navy is the story of the sinking of the Birkenhead. She was a troopship and she struck on a rock. Instantly, the boats were lowered and filled with the women and children. Then, the soldiers and marines were formed up on deck, and they faced their death in perfect order as if on parade while the ship slowly sank.

The then King of Prussia, Frederick IV, was so impressed by the behaviour of the doomed crew on the Birkenhead that he caused this story of "iron discipline and perfect duty" to be read aloud at the head of every regiment in his kingdom.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has referred to the cool courage of the marines, or “ Jollies ” as they are called, in a famous poem :

“ To take your chance in the thick of a rush,  
with the firing all about,  
Is none so bad when you’ve cover to ’and, and  
leave and liking to shout,  
But to stand stock still to the Birken’ead drill  
is a dam tough bullet to chew ;  
An’ they done it, the Jollies, ’er Majesty’s  
Jollies, soldier and sailor, too ! ”

But to return to the Amphion. The story I like best is one that was told in a bluejacket’s letter to his parents :

“ We were all stunned on the upper deck, surrounded with flame and smoke. Then we saw our captain come. His arms were burnt, and his hair ; he spoke very nice. ‘ Cheer up, men, and be brave ; we shall all get saved.’ Of course that cheered up everyone. No excitement at all. The biggest part of us stripped off to swim for it, but no one left that ship until the captain gave the order to go, and, thank God, we were all saved that was alive.”

You notice that gallant Captain Fox struck first a noble note, "Be brave!" he cried; and then, as an afterthought, "We shall all get saved."

A day or two later it was shown that the British Navy knows how to honour a brave foe. Four members of the crew of the *Amphion* and four of the German mine-layer's crew died in hospital at Harwich. Each son of the sea, Briton and German, was provided with the same kind of coffin, and the same service was performed for each of the eight separately. The funerals were most reverently conducted, each coffin being hoisted on the shoulders of seamen. The dead Britons had a Union Jack for pall, the Germans the ensign of their Fatherland. They were all lowered into one grave. Volleys were fired, and the Last Post sounded.

To show you the kind of risk our sailors run without a thought of self, hearken to the amazing adventures of Stationmaster Stapleton, of Hykeham, who is a Naval Reserve man. He received his call, joined his ship, the *Amphion*, found himself in action, was sunk, and was rescued—all within forty-eight hours of leaving his little wayside station!

### III

It was on August 28 that Sir John Jellicoe first tried his hand at the surprise game of the Germans. It was a brilliant success.

Out of the morning mist our ships crept and caught a German cruiser squadron lying in supposed safety under the guns of Heligoland. We sank the German protected cruiser Mainz and another cruiser of the same class, while a third cruiser "disappeared" in the mist, heavily on fire, and in a sinking condition. We also badly damaged some smaller craft, while our own ships got off very lightly. But we had to mourn the loss of sixty-nine men killed and wounded, including Lieut.-Commander Nigel Barttelot and Lieut. Eric Westmacott among the killed.

All the ships which took part in this action had the words "Heligoland, August 28, 1914," painted in gold letters in a conspicuous place aboard them. But special honour was paid to the light cruiser Arethusa.

This gallant little ship showed herself worthy of her name, which is one of the most glorious in the Navy.

C

In recognition of the notable part she played in the fight, the Admiralty ordered the famous old song of "The Saucy Arethusa" to be engraved upon a brass plate and set up in a prominent place on board the ship. The first verse runs :

"Come all ye sailors bold,  
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,  
While English glory I unfold,  
Huzza for the Arethusa !  
Her men are staunch  
To their favourite launch,  
And when the foe shall meet our fire,  
Sooner than strike we'll all expire  
On board of the Arethusa."

The Arethusa, which flew the broad pennant of Commodore Tyrwhitt (this is the special flag always flown by commodores), was chosen for the honour of leading the attack.

At the head of a line of destroyers, which are small but very fast vessels, she sallied forth, intending to cut off the German ships and drive them into the open sea, there to fight them at leisure. But two German cruisers attacked

her first at a distance of nearly two miles. This seems a long way, but naval guns can shoot much further than that. The Germans did her some damage, but she drove them off, and one of them she seriously injured.

Later on in the morning she fought two other German ships, and helped to sink the Mainz. In these actions she suffered so much that many of her guns were made useless and her speed was lessened to ten knots, which of course is very slow.

About one o'clock the gallant Arethusa was discovered in her crippled condition by two German cruisers, and they would certainly have sunk her if British ships had not come to the rescue. These ships turned the tables with a vengeance, for they chased and sank the Germans in their turn.

The Arethusa had done splendidly, all the more splendidly you will agree when you hear that she had only been commissioned a few days before. "Commissioned" means got ready for service, with crew, guns, stores, and everything necessary for going to sea. Thus, her officers and crew were new to one another and the ship was new to them, and yet they could not have fought better.

The whole Empire felt a thrill of pride in the exploit of the *Arethusa*. In far-off Johannesburg 2081 miners clubbed together, paying a penny each to send a telegram congratulating Commodore Tyrwhitt and his whole ship's company on their victory.

Fighting at sea is, I think, in some ways more dreadful than fighting on land. There is the same terrible distance from the enemy, and the shells make the same fearful screaming noise in the air. But if your ship is struck a mortal blow, you seem to have less chance than you would have in land fighting, especially if your ship blows up before sinking.

But that is a landsman's feeling. You may be sure that our gallant tars do not trouble their heads whether the danger is more or less. Indeed, this Heligoland action showed most vividly that the modern Navy is worthy of all her glorious traditions.

I must tell you about Lieut.-Commander Barttelot and his gallant little destroyer, the *Liberty*. She and the other destroyers did not hesitate to engage much bigger and stronger German ships, and naturally they got knocked about a bit.

After the funnel of the Liberty had been shot away, this brave officer stood on the bridge and gave his orders as quietly as if he were at a sham fight. A shell shot off one of his legs, but he seized the rails of the bridge, steadied himself, and continued giving his commands. Shortly after another shell struck the Liberty and killed him.

Not less thrilling is the story of Lieut.-Commander Frank Rose, of the destroyer Laurel, who was seriously wounded in the left leg. His men urged him to go below, but he simply shifted the weight on to the other leg and continued to issue his orders. Soon his one sound leg was struck by a shell, and down he came on the bridge, but he still declined to go below. His signalman tore off his trousers to prevent the wound from being poisoned, and to this act of thoughtful devotion Lieut.-Commander Rose probably owed his life. As at last he lay swooning on the bridge, one of his petty officers fastened a lifebelt round him.

By this time there only remained three rounds of ammunition, and it appeared as if the little Laurel could not live much longer in the fire to which she was then exposed. But she did.



The gallantry of all our seamen was indeed something to be proud of, and it was shown by fighters and non-fighters alike.

For example, the surgeon of the *Arethusa*, who was, as I have explained, new to the ship like the others, was a marvel of coolness. Before she was struck he busied himself in handing out ammunition to the gunners, and when the casualties began he stuck to his work of healing under fire. He hadn't time to dress properly, so there he was, wearing red leather slippers, uniform trousers, and the coat of his pyjamas !

One officer of the *Arethusa* had his leg grazed by a shell which fell five or six feet behind him. He was hurled along the deck, and appeared to be much relieved when he discovered that both his legs had not been shot away. But they were badly bruised. There were no crutches on board, so one of the crew gave him a pair of broomsticks, by the aid of which he stuck to his post and hobbled round giving his orders.

This action, the Battle of the Bight as it was called, inspired many poets. To my mind by far the finest it called forth was by Mr. William Watson. In it he ad-

dresses the mighty dead of the sea service, and his last verse runs :

“ Sleep on, O Drake, sleep well !  
Thou hast thy heart's desire.  
Grenville, whom nought could quell,  
Thou dost hand on thy fire.  
And thou that had'st no peer,  
Nelson ! thou need'st not fear :  
Thy sons and heirs are here,  
Nor shall they shame their sire.”

The sea has always bred heroes. At the Battle of Trafalgar one of the French captains had both his legs shot off. He had himself placed in a barrel of bran, and went on directing his men in the hour of defeat to the end.

At the Battle of the Nile a little midshipman, only fourteen years old, named John Hindmarsh, gave the order which saved the Bellerophon. Seeing that the fire in L'Orient would spread to the Bellerophon, he got some men down and cut her cable and then had the sprit-sail set. The captain was below, having a wound dressed, and the first lieutenant was also below on duty. Hindmarsh was publicly thanked by Nelson himself.

Then it was wooden ships and sails ; now it is ships of steel and complicated machinery. But the spirit of Navy men remains every whit as cool and gallant.

This first naval action off Heligoland also showed the splendid chivalry of our seamen.

When the German ships were seen to be sinking, the British commanders ordered the destroyers to cease fire. All boats were lowered to pick up survivors ; but while this was being done, German destroyers and cruisers actually opened a heavy fire on the boats. Our destroyers were thus forced to retire, and one of them, the Defender, generously left her boat to the German prisoners, nearly all of whom were wounded.

Yet more. The commanding officer of Submarine E4, after covering the retreat of one of the destroyers, returned to the boats and removed the British officers and men. He might also have taken a German officer and six unwounded men prisoners, but as there were eighteen Germans very badly wounded, he humanely left the officer and unwounded men to care for them and navigate the boats which contained them. He did something else. He provided the boats with water, biscuits, and a compass,

and he generously gave the officer the position and course to Heligoland. As for the officer and men of the Defender, they stripped themselves of everything but their trousers and tore up their clothes to serve as bandages for the wounded Germans.

Some days afterwards a high German official actually asserted that British seamen had fired on the Germans swimming in the water. It is from the reply which our Admiralty made to this cowardly charge that the above facts are taken. As a matter of fact, I am sorry to tell you that some of the German officers fired at their own men in the water with revolvers.

A letter written by a sailor who took part in the Heligoland action told a pretty story of his ship's pet :

“ Our dear little black lucky kitten sat under our foremost gun during the whole of the battle, and wasn't frightened at all, only when we first started firing. But afterwards she sat and licked herself. We all kissed her afterwards ! ”

Sailors are known to be extremely fond of animals. The Naval Volunteers at the Crystal Palace soon acquired two pets—a kitten and a whippet. The latter always

had a red, white, and blue ribbon tied to each of his legs and to his tail.

Soldiers, too, are very fond of pets. The story goes that on one occasion a sergeant appeared on his troopship with a little woolly dog. The quartermaster on duty refused to allow the animal on board. The sergeant thought awhile, and then went on shore. An hour later he came back with a cage. In it was a very queer-looking creature, which, though it had four feet, was covered with hen's feathers. "Can't pass that there dog on board," said the quartermaster. "Dog?" said the sergeant. "This ain't no dog. It's a Maltese four-footed Bird of Paradise, and there's no rules against taking birds on board!"

The laugh was with him, and his pet was allowed on board ship.

#### IV

On September 22 the Germans scored a success against us with a submarine attack. This resulted in the loss of three cruisers, the Aboukir, Hogue, and Cressy. These were all old ships, and as a matter of fact were afloat for

the last time, as the Admiralty had decided to sell them for breaking up. What could not be replaced was the loss of some twelve hundred officers and men. Only about eight hundred and fifty were saved out of over two thousand.

I expect that most of you have seen a picture of a submarine, but I do not suppose that any of you know very much about this extraordinary deep-sea fighting ship, which has been well said to wear the cloak of darkness. The submarine can attack unseen with the deadly weapon of the torpedo, and she can retreat undiscovered. But she is rather slow and she is what is called blind in attack ; she has to come up to the surface before she can see exactly where her enemy is. It is said that if she could get along more quickly than she does she could do a great deal more mischief. Still, when commanded and manned by cool, brave men, and when she has luck on her side, she can do quite mischief enough.

The disaster would probably not have happened if the three cruisers had had with them their usual escort of destroyers—those speedy little craft which are the terror of submarines. Unfortunately, the weather was very bad,

and the destroyers were delayed. This was the opportunity for which the German submarine, commanded by Lieut.-Commander Weddingen, had long been waiting.

The cruisers were on patrol duty somewhere off the Hook of Holland. They did not see the tiny periscope of the submarine, as it emerged amid the ruffled waters. The German had nine torpedoes to fire, and she had plenty of time to choose her first victim. This was the Aboukir. Lieut.-Commander Weddingen himself thought his torpedo hit the cruiser under one of her magazines, which by exploding helped to destroy the ship. However that may be, the Aboukir soon broke up and sank, and of course her sister ships stopped and lowered boats to rescue as many as possible of the crew.

Alas! the moment the Hogue stopped she became an easy mark. The German submarine gave her two torpedoes in quick succession, and in about five minutes the Hogue had gone to the bottom and the sea was covered with men, some swimming for dear life, others clinging to tables, stools, chairs, planks, etc., which had been thrown off the ship. Not immediately, but soon afterwards, the Cressy was torpedoed and sank.

The brotherhood of the sea is very strong, and British seamen are always generous in their appreciation of an enemy's bravery. They admired the daring of the German submarine, but they could not help being sorry for the fact that it meanly advanced under cover of a German trawler which had hoisted the Dutch flag. Further, one regrets to have to add that the trawler made no attempt to save our drowning seamen, in this forming a very great contrast to the British tars who always do their very best to rescue their drowning enemies.

But there came up two trawlers, which were really Dutch, the Flora and the Titan, and their captains and crews worked like heroes to save the lives of our men. They took many hundreds to Holland, where the British seamen were most kindly treated, being fed and clothed and sent back to England after resting. Some of our poor fellows died of the cold and exposure in the sea, and these the kindly Dutchmen buried with all honour and reverence.

The mishap was a sad blow to the nation, all the more because it was seen that the Hogue and the Cressy really met their doom owing to their efforts to save the



crew of the Aboukir. But everybody drew comfort from the splendid gallantry shown by all our seamen, from the captains downwards. Yet many as were the stories of brave deeds which came to light, we may be sure that at least as many more will never be known, the eye-witnesses having all perished. I will give you a few examples of deeds which did come to light.

Do you remember the cool, brave surgeon on the Arethusa? There was one equally brave and resourceful on the Cressy. Together with four men, he was clinging to some wreckage, and he instructed his comrades to rub each other's legs with their naked feet alternately, and so keep their blood circulating. They hung on for two or three hours, and finally all were rescued, no doubt owing to the surgeon's clever idea.

One survivor wrote after his awful ordeal :

“ The best thing I saw was the coolness of a little cadet. Not more than fourteen he looked. He drifted near me, he and a seaman clinging with their hands and elbows on the same bit of wood. I never saw anything so calm as that lad! He was talking to the seaman with him. ‘ Well,’ he says, ‘ we’ve got to carry on like this,

and if we die we shall die game.' And with that he begins to talk about everyday things on the sunken ship. 'What's the new chief engineer like?' he says, and chats about little incidents in the mess. Only fourteen, a little light-haired boy. I hope he was saved."

What a splendid, lion-hearted boy! Was he saved? you will ask. I cannot be sure, but I think he was.

Midshipman Cazalet of the Cressy, aged sixteen, saved no fewer than eighty-eight lives, including one of his own officers. When Mr. Cazalet saw that the Aboukir had been hit, he went out in the Cressy's whaler and picked up twenty-five men. He took them to the picket boat of the Hogue, and went back for more. Altogether he picked up two more boatloads, and it was not till he could see no more survivors that he himself took refuge on board the Dutch trawler Titan.

A little drummer-boy of the Marines, Cecil Kneller, who was only fifteen, had a great adventure, for he kept himself afloat in the water for about four hours with the aid of an empty rum cask. And when he got back to his father, who is a railway porter living at Chatham, it was

noticed that he was just as rosy-cheeked as when he went away ! So he did not suffer much from his long bath.

I am sorry to tell you that Captain Johnson, of the Cressy, was not among the saved. This very gallant gentleman was last seen on the bridge of his ship, carefully tying leaden weights round a parcel, which he dropped into the sea.

Can you guess what was in that parcel ? It was the secret signal-book of the ship, and it was most important that it should not fall into the hands of the enemy. If the enemy had got hold of it, then they would have been able to read the signals with which our ships talk to one another, and that might easily have led to a terrible disaster.

Captain Johnson was determined that that should not happen, and when he had cast the parcel into the sea, he went down with his ship contented, for he had done his duty.

## V

Much excitement was caused by the exploits of the German cruiser Emden, which took and sank over twenty British merchantmen, and disposed of several warships.

Her commander, Captain von Muller, behaved chivalrously to the crews of his prizes, treating them well while in his power, and sending them to the nearest port. This contrast with the behaviour of the Germans on land made everybody realise the brotherhood of the sea.

For the first time in any big war, the fastest ocean liners on both sides were armed with naval guns and turned into warships. I am going to tell you about a most exciting duel between two of these armed liners, which happened on September 14. Some of you may have crossed the Atlantic to America in the White Star liner Carmania, and if so you will read with all the more interest the story of her victory over the German ship Cap Trafalgar.

You will easily understand that when the Carmania was taken over by the British Navy and became H.M.S. Carmania, a good many changes were made. The comfortable quarters for passengers, the splendid state-rooms and luxurious berths, were ripped out, because fire is a great danger in a warship and anything that will burn is usually thrown overboard when she goes into action. Even as it was, a shell from the enemy did set the Carmania on fire, as we shall see.

D

Fights between single ships are, I think, in some ways more exciting than big battles. At any rate, it is easier to understand them. When it is a case of only two ships, we can imagine ourselves on board one of them and looking on at the struggle.

Have you ever heard how the gallant Captain Broke, of H.M.S. Shannon, engaged and defeated the American warship Chesapeake? That was when we were at war with America, just a hundred years ago. The duel took place outside New York Harbour, in sight of land, and crowds came out to see the sight. Their feelings must have been very mixed, for the Chesapeake struck her flag after a short and very violent fight. But as the Americans are a brave and generous people, they must have applauded the clever seamanship of gallant Captain Broke.

You may remember, too, the plucky fight of the little Revenge against enormous odds, and Tennyson's noble ballad in which the story is told.

I cannot tell you why the Germans named their ship Cap Trafalgar, after the scene of Nelson's last and greatest victory, especially as there is a splendid ship named

Trafalgar in the British Navy. But it does not much matter, as the Cap Trafalgar now lies at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

The crew of the Carmania were just sitting down to their mid-day dinner when the look-out men sounded the alarm. Instantly everyone tumbled up and went to his place, and all eyes were turned on a big ship lying about five miles off, as big as the Carmania herself, and looking like a liner. In fact, the Germans, with their usual cunning, had painted her two funnels to look like a Union-Castle liner. The Cap Trafalgar was pretending to be a British ship !

The trick did her no good, however ; the captain of the Carmania was not running any risks. " Give her a shot," he cried, " but don't hit her." The gun-layer gave her a neat shot just across her bows, and at that instant the stranger opened fire. The Carmania replied with all her port guns, and the fight immediately became furious.

The German was beaten for two reasons. First, because he fired too high, only smashing the Carmania's

masts and rigging, whereas we put in most of our shots right on the German's water-line. Secondly, because the Carmania was much better handled, her captain turning her so that the enemy could only fire at her endways and not sideways.

The Cap Trafalgar took fire in the forward part, but still she gallantly went on fighting. When at last she decided to try and escape, she found it was too late. Already she was sinking, and the men of the Carmania, which had by this time practically ceased firing, saw a very curious thing. They saw the enemy turn over on her side, so that they could look right down her funnels, which were level with the water. Even then the German ship did not haul down her flag. There was an explosion and her bows went under; then another explosion and the great vessel sank. All the honours of war to this brave foe !

The Cap Trafalgar made 304 holes in the Carmania, but only two of them were serious shots in the side of the ship. This was not very good shooting when you think that the Carmania is 675 feet long—longer than many a London street—and stands 60 feet out of the water, as tall as a tall house.

The most serious damage done to the *Carmania* was by a shell, which set her on fire under her fore-bridge, and made steering difficult. The fire spread so much that it prevented the *Carmania*'s men from going to the rescue of the Germans in the water. But before she sank five boats put off from the *Cap Trafalgar*, and I am glad to say they were all rescued by a coal-ship—two hundred and seventy-nine officers and men.

So much for this exciting little fight. The two ships were almost exactly equal in size and strength, and the British vessel won on her merits by better seamanship and better gunnery. No wonder the Navy was pleased.

## VI

Now I must tell you about Lieut.-Commander Max K. Horton, of Submarine *Eg*, and how he earned the nickname of "The Double-toothed Pirate."

You know how terribly dangerous the submarine service is. These ships are long and narrow, shaped rather like a cigar, and they can travel a long way under the water.



But they are very fragile, and their gallant crews are always ready for instant death.

The day before the *Carmania* sank the *Cap Trafalgar*, September 13, Lieut.-Commander Horton took a little trip out to the Frisian Islands in *Eg*. He found the German light cruiser *Hela* and sank her with a torpedo, and got away without being seen.

The loss of the *Hela* herself did not matter much to the Germans, as she was nearly ten years old and not of much fighting value. But what did matter was the upset to the nerves of the Germans. This is a most valuable thing in war—to make your enemy feel “jumpy.”

It is said that *Eg* came back to Harwich flying a little yellow flag bearing a skull and crossbones, which, as you probably know, is the badge of the Kaiser's favourite regiment of Brandenburg Hussars.

The next exploit of *Eg* was even more daring, even more certain to make the Germans “jumpy.”

Again the little ship went off to the Frisian Islands, and there she torpedoed and sank a German destroyer. If you look at the map, you will see how close these islands

are to the German naval stations of Wilhelmshaven and Emden. What should we have felt if a German submarine had come up and sunk a British ship quite close to Portsmouth and Plymouth? However, the War may bring us worse surprises than that, and if it does we must bear them bravely.

Eg had an exciting time. While she was watching for her prey, she saw a big German cruiser and she had to dive. When she came up again, the cruiser had gone, but there was a destroyer instead, and this she marked down. At one time she was actually too near the destroyer to fire a torpedo because it would have been dangerous to herself. At last she got about six hundred yards off and then she fired two torpedoes, one after the other. The first missed, but the second hit the destroyer fairly in the middle and blew her to pieces. Another German destroyer which was near hastily ran away.

Lieut.-Commander Horton and his gallant men returned to Harwich flying the little yellow flag, and underneath it a little white flag, also bearing the grim device of a skull and crossbones. It was then that he was given the jesting nickname of "The Double-toothed Pirate,"

for as you know the skull and crossbones has always been the emblem of pirates.

I do not myself like this nickname, for Lieut.-Commander Horton is by no means a pirate. On the contrary, he always fights fair. He is as clever as he is brave, and he has always been a great believer in submarines, which he has been studying for years. When he was serving in H.M.S. Duke of Edinburgh he won a gold medal for saving life. That was when the Delhi went ashore with the Princess Royal and the late Duke of Fife and their children on board.

An amusing story is told which shows the coolness of submarine officers. One of these gallant fellows, finding that the enemy could see him on the surface by daylight, sank his boat to the bottom and waited for night. Someone asked him what he did all that time. "I did very well," he said, "we played auction bridge, and I won 4s. 11½d." But games like this at the bottom of the sea are the great exception.

Never forget our seamen and what they are doing for us in storm, in cold, and in fog. If you have the good

fortune to be related to a boy or man in the Navy, write to him regularly and tell him all the home news. He will love to hear it, and, busy as he may be, will probably find time to answer you. But if you don't hear for a long time, remember that the delightful verses—with only one word altered—which were written by the Earl of Dorset at sea in 1665 are as true now as they were two hundred and fifty years ago :

“ To all you children now at land  
We men at sea indite ;  
But first would have you understand  
How hard it is to write :  
The Muses now, and Neptune too,  
We must implore to write to you.

For though the Muses should prove kind,  
And fill our empty brain,  
Yet if rough Neptune rouse the wind  
To wave the azure main,  
Our paper, pen, and ink, and we,  
Roll up and down our ships at sea.”

## CHAPTER III

### BRITAIN, TO ARMS!

This England never did, nor never shall  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.  
Come the three corners of the world in arms  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue  
If England to herself do rest but true

SHAKESPEARE.

Men whisper that our arm is weak,  
Men say our blood is cold,  
And that our hearts no longer speak  
That clarion note of old ;  
But let the spear and sword draw near  
The sleeping lion's den,  
Our island shore shall start once more  
To life with armed men.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

**J**UST before the war broke out, a friend of mine took her three grandchildren for a holiday to Wimereux, a French seaside place near Boulogne. They were quite little children, the youngest indeed being still a baby. On the day that my friend knew that war was certain she was naturally very anxious to get the children safely back to England.

That night she sent them to bed early, and she herself did not sit up late. On her way to her room she looked in on the children to see if they wanted anything. To her surprise, only the baby was in bed. The two elder ones had drawn up the blind and were looking out of the window on the sea.

“ Oh, Granny ! ” they cried, “ do come and look ! ”

My friend went and stood beside them, and there, spread out before her in the moonlight, she saw a most wonderful sight, one that no Englishwoman could look upon without a thrill of pride.

Beyond the fort built by Napoleon, beyond a rock on which stood a solitary French sentinel leaning on his rifle, the whole sea was covered with the British Fleet, ship after ship in regular lines—Dreadnoughts, cruisers, all with their attendant torpedo-boats, destroyers, and submarines.

There they lay, with none of the bravery of flags flying and bands playing, as when the King reviews his Fleet, but cold and vigilant, all stripped for action. Not a man could be seen on board—only the long guns.

The children, looking on, partly understood the silent strength of that great armada of warships, and they went

back to bed contented with their grandmother's promise to tell them all about it to-morrow.

Next morning the children ran to the window, but the British Fleet had gone, vanished as silently as it had come, and the sea was almost clear.

“ What has happened ? Why have the ships gone ? ” The children pressed my friend with eager questions, and as you will also want to put the same questions, I cannot do better than tell you what she told them.

The great war with Germany had begun, and the British Fleet had gone eastwards to the North Sea, there to watch for the German Fleet !

But the most wonderful thing was that now, after a hundred years, British soldiers were going to fight again on the Continent. Almost exactly a hundred years ago Wellington, aided by German troops, had finally crushed Napoleon on the field of Waterloo. But now the British and the French were fast friends, and they were going to fight shoulder to shoulder against the German hosts.

A great writer, who was even greater as a poet, George Meredith, wrote some noble lines on this new-found friendship. I quote one verse :

“ Joy that no more with murder’s frown  
The ancient rivals bark apart.  
Now Nelson to brave France is shown  
A hero after her own heart :  
And he now scanning that quick race  
To whom through life his glove was thrown,  
Would know a sister spirit to embrace.”

You must never think of the past as if it were something quite different from the present. In some ways this great war brings us much nearer the glorious old England which was always at war in Flanders, as Belgium was then called.

Those old heroical conflicts of long ago produced some wonderful books. Let us hope that the time will come when some great writer of the future will create as vividly real a man as Sterne’s Uncle Toby.

After being wounded at the siege of Namur, Uncle Toby spent his peaceful old age in following Marl-



borough's army on his bowling-green. Sterne describes how the old man set up model fortifications with batteries, saps, ditches, and palisadoes, and so, with the help of maps and books as well as of Corporal Trim, his soldier servant, he was able to fight over again, not only his old battles but those that were still going on.

The Uncle Toby of the future will set up miniature pieces of artillery and tiny trenches in place of the batteries and palisadoes of the past. Let us hope, however, that he will be as noble-hearted and kindly a man as his famous predecessor.

When you are older, I hope you will read and re-read this wonderful book, which is called "Tristram Shandy." I will only add here Uncle Toby's defence of Britain at war, because it applies so well to the present War with Germany.

"What is War," he asked, "what is it, when fought as ours has been, upon Principles of *Liberty* and Principles of *Honour*, what is it but the Getting together of Quiet and Harmless People with their Swords in their Hands, to keep the Ambitious and Turbulent within Bounds ? "

I cannot help feeling rather sorry that most of you will not remember what the British Army was like before the days of khaki. I am rather sorry for myself that I cannot remember the time when our troops wore the occasionally beautiful, the always quaint, and the sometimes grotesque uniforms which you see in old pictures and engravings. At the Naval and Military Tournament every year some of the old picturesque uniforms and the curious old drill are revived. I remember, in particular, how Sir Mark Sykes with wonderful skill brought to life again before us in this way a company of the famous "Green Howards."

Not much more than a hundred years ago, soldiers all wore pigtails, but both officers and men hated them, and when at last they were abolished, in 1808, some of the regiments actually made bonfires of their pigtails while others buried them !

The French still wear the blue and red uniform, and sad to say it is greatly owing to that fact that they have suffered so terribly from the German fire. It seems that an airman, even when flying very high, sees the bright patches of blue lying beneath him, when the British

khaki, and even more the greenish-grey German uniform, would be quite invisible.

Many of you, I am sure, have been to Boulogne, either to spend a happy summer holiday there, or when going through to some other part of France. Henceforth we shall all look upon the beautiful old French port with a new interest and a new respect. For there the British Expeditionary Force landed in August 1914.

Till that date Boulogne was chiefly famous as having been the “jumping-off place” from which Napoleon planned to make a victorious invasion of England. It was the Battle of Waterloo which saved us from that invasion. So Boulogne had a long and intimate acquaintance with British warriors, but never till this year in the guise of friends. The noble ghosts of these British warriors were evoked in splendid fashion in the following lines by Mr. Justin Huntly M’Carthy :

“ One dreamer, when our English soldiers trod  
But yesterday the welcoming fields of France,  
Saw war-gaunt shadows gathering stare askance  
Upon those levies and that alien sod—

Saw Churchill's smile and Wellington's curt nod,  
Saw Harry with his Crispins, Chandos' lance,  
And the Edwards on whose breasts the leopards dance :  
Then heard a gust of ghostly thanks to God  
That the most famous quarrel of all time  
In the most famous friendship ends at last ;  
Such flame of friendship as God fans to forge  
A sword to strike the Dragon of the Slime,  
Bidding St. Denis with St. George stand fast  
Against the Worm. St. Denis and St. George ! ”

I ought perhaps to explain that “ Churchill's smile ” does not mean the smile of Mr. Winston Churchill, but of his great ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough. The Worm is of course an old name for the Dragon and stands in this case for Germany, and St. Denis is the old battle-cry of France, as St. George is that of England.

In spite of what people may tell you to the contrary, never believe that a secret cannot be kept. Honourable people always keep a secret. It shows how very many honourable people there must be, both in England and in France, when I tell you that the fact that this wonderful force of 110,000 men with all their guns and stores was being taken across to France, was never publicly revealed

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till Lord Kitchener allowed it to be announced in the newspapers.

And yet what was happening day by day and hour by hour must have been known to thousands of people in both countries. The reason for this secrecy was, as you can easily guess, to furnish a nice little surprise for the enemy. And that it was a real surprise for the enemy is proved by a German Army Order, which afterwards fell into our hands, referring to a rumour that a British force might be coming. That Army Order was dated August 21, after the whole force had landed !

I want you particularly to understand also that it is a difficult job to take an army of horse and foot and guns across even so short a bit of sea as the English Channel. It takes many big ships, called transports, and they have to be most carefully guarded by warships while they are crossing.

Never forget that if it had not been for the British Navy the Army could never have got across the Channel safely. Nor could the constant stream of fresh troops and horses and food and shells and cartridges and all

the other hundred and one things that an army needs in the field of battle.

Everything possible was done to prevent the enemy from knowing about the force which was being sent against him. The regiments left their depots in ignorance of where they were being sent. Even the drivers of the engines which drew the trains to Southampton were not told their destination beforehand. Most wonderful of all, the captain of each ship bearing a thousand or more soldiers started out from Southampton not knowing whither he was bound till he was ten miles from shore. Then he opened a sealed envelope containing his orders. Of course everyone had a shrewd suspicion, but there was no talking, no gossip.

Equally in the dark were the people of Boulogne, though they must have known great events were astir, for they could not help seeing some of the preparations which had to be made for receiving such an army.

Before he left our shores each soldier received a message from the King and a message from Lord Kitchener. This is the whole of the King's message :

“ You are leaving home to fight for the safety and honour of my Empire. Belgium, which country we are pledged to defend, has been attacked, and France is about to be invaded by the same powerful foe. I have implicit confidence in you, my soldiers. Duty is your watchword and I know your duty will be nobly done. I shall follow your every moment with deepest interest and mark with eager satisfaction your daily progress. Indeed, your welfare will never be absent from my thoughts. I pray God to bless you and guard you and bring you back victorious.

“ GEORGE R. et I.”

“ R. et I.” means “ Rex et Imperator,” the Latin for King and Emperor, for the King is also Emperor of India.

The message from Lord Kitchener was a good deal longer, and I will only give you these sentences from what has been well described as the noblest message ever sent to fighting men :

“ You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy.

“ Remember that the honour of the British Empire depends on your individual conduct, and you can do your country no better service than in showing yourself in

France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

“ Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind. Always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome and to be trusted ; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust.

“ Do your duty bravely. Fear God. Honour the King.

“ KITCHENER, Field-Marshal.”

It was rather a fine touch of the French military authorities to set aside for the British Army the exact stretch of ground where Napoleon encamped *his* Expeditionary Force nearly a century before. The more we know about this war, the more wonderful a man Napoleon turns out to have been. Even in this matter of choosing the best and healthiest spot for a camp, the modern commanders could not do better than follow closely in his firm footsteps.

Those of us who have been to Boulogne must have driven or walked to the column which the town put up many years ago to the memory of England's great enemy. How strange to think that British soldiers rested, before



starting out on the most serious venture in their history, under the very shadow of that column !

The people of Boulogne—or one ought to say what was left of them, for of course their husbands, sons, and brothers were already at the front—gave our troops a most wonderful welcome. This was, however, but a foretaste of how they were to be treated in every district of France traversed by them. As many of our soldiers wrote home, they were in some cases almost killed with kindness.

Some of our troops were fortunate enough to remain at Boulogne ten days. Others only had a few hours' rest before they were hurried up to the front. Yet others again left the camp full of high spirits, with laughter and happy *au revoirs*, to come back within a very few days wounded and on their way to hospital.

As you all know, the command of the British Force was given to Field-Marshal Sir John French, and you may like me to tell you something of this great soldier.

The first interesting thing about him is that, perhaps owing to the fact that his father was a naval officer, he

served for a time in the Navy as a midshipman. Then he became a lieutenant in the Militia, or, as we should say now, the Territorials, and afterwards joined the 19th Hussars. He soon showed the splendid stuff he was made of, both in peace and in war. I think you will like to know that he was among those British officers who made the last desperate attempt to rescue General Gordon.

He is what is called a great cavalry leader, and it has been said that what Murat was to Napoleon, French proved himself to be to Roberts and to Kitchener during the South African War. If a service of great hazard and peril had to be performed, it was always French and his men who were asked to do it.

But what I want you to remember about Sir John French is, not only that he is a great soldier and a very brave man, but also that he is a singularly modest man. In each and all of his despatches during this great war he has always under-estimated his victories, in this setting an example which has not been followed by the enemy.

Sir John French has another very rare quality, and one which some famous military commanders have lacked,

I mean the quality of generosity. There is not in his nature a touch of envy, or of that feeling which has sometimes made even very great men dislike and deplore any kind of rivalry. He has paid noble tributes to the officers working under him, and his commendation of his gallant army must have filled every man of them with a glow of pride and pleasure. Among the rank and file, who call him among themselves simply "Johnny," he is almost worshipped, and they have the most absolute belief in his powers of leadership.

Like all great cavalry leaders, Sir John French is exceedingly fond of horses. He felt bitterly the death of a favourite charger which had carried him through the whole of the South African campaign, and which wore a medal round its neck recording its services. Sir John French had this good horse buried at Aldershot, and a memorial now marks the gallant charger's grave.

You may be interested to learn that Napoleon's charger, a small, thick-set barb, lives in many a noble painting. He spent his old age at the Jardin des Plantes, the "Zoo" of Paris, and used to be regularly visited by the members of his master's Old Guard.

As for the Duke of Wellington's famous horse, Copenhagen, familiar in many pictures, he was remarkable for his endurance, and however hard a day he had gone through—on one occasion Copenhagen carried the Iron Duke for sixteen hours at a stretch—he never refused his corn, which he used to eat very oddly, lying down. When he died of old age at Strathfieldsaye, he was buried with military honours.

Crimean Bob was for a long time the oldest horse in the British Army. He was a pretty, chestnut-coloured horse, and joined as a four-year-old in 1833. In 1842, he went on foreign service for the first time. He came back without a scratch, and embarked for the Crimea in 1854. He was ridden in the Charge of the Light Brigade—the story of which you know from Tennyson's famous poem, "Half a league, half a league, half a league onward"—as well as all through the battles of the Alma and Inkerman. During the whole of the campaign he was never once struck off duty through sickness. On his return home he was carefully looked after at Cahir Barracks in Ireland till his death, which took place at an extraordinary old age.

Perhaps the thing which first made many of the country people in peaceful England understand that we were *really* at war, was what is called the "requisitioning" of horses. Supposing one of you had been leading a horse along a lane near home, you might, and almost certainly would, have been suddenly ordered to hand it over to be used for army purposes, of course at a fair price.

I heard of one venerable lady who was taking a nice drive, as she always did for an hour every afternoon. Her two fat horses were being driven, as always, by her fat old coachman, when suddenly an officer jumped out of a wood at the side of the road and politely requested her to hand them over !

The old lady was very much agitated, and the coachman pleaded that he might at least take his mistress home. "Yes, if you give me your word to have the horses back here within an hour." "And what is to happen to me? It's my living you're taking away, sir!" "Oh, you can come too, and look after your horses!"

A pretty little story was told about the same time. A mare arrived at a well-known depot with other requisitioned animals. Tied round her neck was a label,

with a tiny sprig of heather fastened by a piece of blue silk ribbon. The label bore the brief but pathetic message :  
“ Sorry Lady has to leave us. Hope she will return to us safe and sound. With much love.”

This appeal found its way to a soldier's heart, and he wrote from Woolwich to the *Daily Sketch* :

“ I should be obliged if you would inform Ivy Clayton that her little horse has arrived here safe and well, and that she can rest assured that ‘ Lady ’ will receive every attention during her brief stay with us. Sincerely hoping that she will soon recover her pet,

“ GUNNER R.H.A.”

But to return to Sir John French and his officers. This word “ officer ” is so familiar that I do not suppose anyone of you has ever stopped to think what it means.

The ideal officer is gallant, intelligent, and energetic. He is aware that influence over his men is not obtained by discipline alone, but by kindness, firmness, and good sense. He explains to a certain extent to the men under him the reasons for his orders. He does not require of them the blind obedience which is exacted by the German officer. In fact, I cannot do better than quote

the description given by a certain corporal in an old comedy called *The Poor Gentleman* :

“ A good officer, do you see, cannot help being a kind-hearted man. Ship an officer, we will say, with his company to a foreign climate ; he lands and endures heat, cold, and fatigue, hunger, thirst, sickness ; now marching over the burning plain, now up to his knees in wet in the trench ; how could a man suffer such hardships with a parcel of honest fellows under his command, and not learn to feel for his fellow-creatures ? ”

It is because our officers are good officers that the men follow them to the death. It is because they are not only firm and just, but also kind, that they are loved, honoured, and obeyed. A soldier never fails his officer if he has confidence in him, and if he knows he will never be asked for undue exertion unless the good of the service requires it.

During the passage across the Channel of our Expeditionary Force many wonderful deeds of daring were done by our brave airmen. One such was considered so remarkable as to be told in the official news later despatched from the front, and it is, I think, difficult to beat for cool courage.

During one of the airship patrols it became necessary to change a propeller blade of one of the engines. The captain feared it would be necessary to descend for this purpose, but two of the crew immediately volunteered to carry out this difficult task in the air. Climbing out on to the bracket, carrying the propeller shafting, they completed the hazardous work of changing the blade 2000 feet above the sea.

It was a long time before some of us realised that not only England, Scotland, and Ireland, but also the Greater Britain on which the sun never sets, had gone to war. Gallant deeds are being performed every day all over the Empire, and it is only by accident that we hear of some of them. The War enormously increased their number.

Take, for instance, the magnificent courage shown by Mr. Saxby Wellacott, the son of the Vicar of Totnes. This young man is not a soldier but a civilian attached to the Public Works Department at Accra, in West Africa. Yet he played an active part in the operations of the Field Force which added Togoland to our Empire early in August. The Germans put up a good fight. They mined



the roads and railways and electrified the wire entanglements ; but it is also reported that they used dum-dum bullets, which as you know is not fair fighting.

Mr. Wellacott, together with two French officers and thirty Senegalese troops, advanced on a river called the Chra. The Germans blew up a bridge and opened fire on the tiny allied force with three Maxim guns and a couple of hundred rifles. The firing went on for two hours, and Mr. Wellacott got left behind. He managed, however, to get back to his motor-cycle, started it and rode it for five miles with a wounded man in the side-car. Most wonderful of all, he succeeded in carrying the motor-cycle over two bridges, though it weighed six hundred-weight. At last to his great joy he found the main column but rest was not for him yet. The Allied forces had to fight all day the next day, achieving victory the following morning.

The Germans were foolish enough to think when the war broke out that there would be terrible trouble in Ireland, a rebellion in India, and that the great Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa—would seize the opportunity to desert the Empire.

As a matter of fact, the very opposite of these things happened. Irishmen of all parties rushed to enlist. A great wave of passionate loyalty swept over India. Her Princes and her peoples poured out their offerings of men and money. Regiments of magnificent native soldiers—Rajputs, Sikhs, Gurkhas, Pathans—were granted the dearest wish of their hearts, namely to fight shoulder to shoulder with our white troops.

As for the Dominions, most valuable help in men and money was instantly offered by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and gratefully accepted by the Mother Country. South Africa's help was not less valuable, for the Union Government undertook to conquer the German colonies on the East and the West.

About the middle of October, quite a little army came from Canada: horse, foot, gunners, sappers, all fully equipped. These splendid fellows are used to roughing it, and have their wits sharpened by Colonial life. They brought a great many pets and mascots—dogs, goats, birds, and so on—but the strangest of all was a little boy! He had been a paper boy, and he was so eager to come with the Canadians that one regiment smuggled

him into their ship. By the time they landed in England the little chap had blossomed into a bugler !

I must tell you about the song sung by the Canadian cavalry contingent composed of British Columbian Rough Riders, as they rode through their beautiful country to the sea. This song soon became extraordinarily popular. Here are two verses :

“ British Columbia Horse are we,  
From Canada's Pacific Sea,  
To make the Kaiser understand  
He must respect our Motherland.

We'll make him bow and scrape to us  
For stirring up this horrid fuss ;  
We'll make him dance the Highland Fling  
And ' Rule Britannia ' loudly sing ! ”

These lines may not be very fine poetry, but they have the merit of letting us know exactly how those who sing them feel about this war.

Of course it took some time for the whole British Empire to get to work, but it was clear from the very

beginning that the German hopes of trouble were absurd. I cannot help picturing to myself with some amusement what a shock it must have been to the Kaiser and his advisers when they began to understand what a blunder they had made. Instead of breaking up the British Empire, they had actually succeeded in drawing it closer together and making it very much stronger.

At home also you remember how the outbreak of war seemed to bring us all nearer together, rich and poor alike.

Lord Kitchener became Minister of War, and in response to his appeal hundreds of thousands of fine young men hastened to enlist. Party quarrels stopped like magic, and Conservatives and Liberals and Labour men alike joined together to do what they could to help. The younger members of Parliament went off to join the colours, while the older ones made speeches about the war and took their share of the work of relieving those on whom the war had brought much unmerited suffering.

The Prince of Wales started a great fund for helping people in distress. At the time when I write these words

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he had collected the enormous sum of nearly four millions. The Prince also joined the Grenadier Guards as a subaltern and trained with great enthusiasm. To his bitter disappointment Lord Kitchener did not consider him experienced enough to go to the front yet awhile.

King George was unwearied in visiting his troops in camp, and the wounded in hospital. This in addition to all the heavy daily work he had to do with his Ministers.

Unlike the Kaiser, our King did not boast and rush about making silly speeches. He just set to work and did his duty like the modest gentleman that he is, and the example of coolness and courage that he showed was an inspiration to the whole Empire.

Among all the people who helped on the outbreak of war, I do not think any did better than the Boy Scouts.

They did excellent work, especially in guarding railways and bridges, and about this I heard at the time an amusing story.

A man who was certainly old enough to know better resolved to play a practical joke on some Boy Scouts who

were guarding an important railway bridge. Taking a little bag with him, he crept stealthily along the line. Soon the Scouts challenged him, and then this foolish man pretended to be a German! "Ach!" he cried, trying to imitate the German accent, "Liddle boys, I vill blow up zis bridge." Here the Scouts interrupted him to such purpose that he had to spend a considerable time in hospital! There, let us hope, he repented of his silly joke.

Many hundreds of Boy Scouts did regular coastguard duty in place of the coastguards who were called away on active service. As the weather got cold the Scouts found themselves in urgent need of warm clothing, and Sir Robert Baden Powell, the Chief Scout, appealed for mittens, comforters, stockings, and so on.

Here I may say that every boy and girl ought to help in making such things. Your elders will tell you at any time what things are particularly wanted for the soldiers and sailors exposed to wind and rain and storm on land and sea.

An exciting story of a London boy who would not give his side away is that of Freddy Ascher, aged sixteen.

Freddy was at school near Peronne, in Belgium, when the war broke out. One Sunday morning after church he decided to cycle to Peronne to look for Germans, who were said to be close by.

Just outside the town, two German soldiers on bicycles suddenly pounced on him and took him into the German lines. There he was searched, and from letters which he had from his parents, the German officers discovered that he was English, and of course they began questioning him as to where he had seen the English troops, and if any were near.

Now Freddy had seen some Lancers on the evening before, but he was not going to tell the Germans, whatever might happen to him, so he said he had no idea where the British were. "They must be where you have come from," declared the German officer. But the boy stuck to it that he had not seen them, and the officer at last said: "We are going to keep you a week till you tell me something."

"Of course I was a bit frightened," said Freddy, "but I had resolved that I would never give away the English. They gave me a meal, and after two hours we started on the march. I had to walk between two German soldiers, and was told that if I ran away I should be shot. At the

end of three days we got close to Mons. I had often cycled over the roads we went, and knew the country well. I was again questioned by officers as to where I had seen British troops, but I still said I had never seen any. And then an officer said : ' We are going to let you go, but you must not come back through German lines.' ”

They gave him back his bicycle, and two German soldiers took him a mile, and then told him to ride off.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE BATTLE OF MONS

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,  
Dewy with nature's teardrops as they pass,  
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!  
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass  
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow  
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass  
Of living valour, rolling on the foe  
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.  
BYRON.

**O**N Sunday, August 23, 1914, there was fought what will rank as one of the great Battles of the Ages. For on that Sunday the whole flower of the German Army, including the pick of their famous cavalry, was hurled against the British Army in the proportion of six to one!

I had hoped not to sully with the Kaiser's now notorious address to his troops the pages of a book in which were to be recorded only gallant deeds. But

alone it explains the strong preponderance of numbers at the Battle of Mons.

This is what the German Emperor evidently thought to be an inspiring and dignified message to his generals. I must tell you it was issued on August 19, that is, only four days before our first contact with the enemy :

“ It is my Royal and Imperial command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present, upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English and walk over General French’s contemptible little army.”

How hard the Kaiser’s legions tried to obey his commands you will shortly see. Also how completely they failed, and that although, as I must again remind you, the great outstanding feature of the Battle of Mons was the overwhelming number of the enemy compared to our forces.

The simplest and most homely account often brings a fact more truly home to us than any fine language would do, and I doubt if we shall ever read a more vivid picture

of the opening of this terrific fight than the following passage in a letter written by a young British soldier to his father, who is a gardener : “ You complained last summer, Dad, of the swarm of wasps that destroyed your fruit. That will give you an idea of how the Germans came for us ! ” .

Yet another who took part in this terrific battle, wrote : “ It looked as if we were going to be snowed under ! The mass of men who came on was an avalanche, and everyone of us must have been trodden to death, if not killed by shells or bullets, had not our infantry charged into them on the left wing, not 500 yards from the trench I was in.”

A non-commissioned officer also shows how our side was outnumbered : “ No regiment ever fought harder than we did, and no regiment has ever had better officers ; they went shoulder to shoulder with their men. But you cannot expect impossibilities, no matter how brave the boys are, when one is fighting forces twenty to thirty times as strong.”

Everyone of the great battles in the world's history has some outstanding heroic action to its credit. The

heroes of Mons were British cavalry, for the 9th Lancers made there a charge every whit as gallant and glorious as the famous Charge of the Light Brigade.

A German battery of ten guns had been posted inside a wood, each gun having been skilfully made to look like a small haystack, which caused the British to approach them unsuspectingly. When the guns opened fire, terrible havoc was caused in our ranks, and it seemed impossible to silence them.

It was then that the 9th Lancers made their splendid charge.

The whole regiment rode straight at the German battery, cut down all the gunners, and put the guns out of action. As was the case in the Charge of the Light Brigade they lost more men as they rode back than on their way in.

I think the best account of this wonderful cavalry charge was written by one who was wounded in it. "We were flying at one another as hard as the horses could go. It was a charge such as you see in a picture, every man hoping he would not get his knees crushed by the fellows on each side of him." Does not that remind you of Sir Walter Scott's splendid lines?

“ On came the whirlwind—like the last  
But fiercest sweep of tempest blast ;  
On came the whirlwind—steel gleams broke  
Like lightning through the rolling smoke,  
The war was waked anew.”

There were at least two Frenchmen in this historic charge. The Vicomte de Vauvineux, a French cavalry officer, who rode with the brigade as interpreter, was killed instantly—a gallant officer whose death many in England mourned. Captain Letourey, the French master at Blundell's School in Devon, rode by the side of de Vauvineux, but escaped death as by a miracle. His horse was shot under him, but he caught another, riderless, and rode off unscathed.

While the bulk of the brigade swerved to the right, riding for a hundred yards across the face of the machine guns, a few rode desperately on, bearing charmed lives. But only for a few yards. The trap, baited by the desultory fire of the artillery, was complete. Wire entanglements were buried in the grass thirty yards in front of the guns. Riding full tilt into these, the few who kept their line to the guns fell, and were made prisoners.

Of the 9th Lancers, not more than forty gathered

that night in a village hard by. Others came in next day, and finally some two hundred and twenty in all mustered out of the entire regiment.

A trooper of the 9th Lancers in writing home mentioned a fact which I thought very touching, and the admission of which showed that he was really a brave man. He said that when going into action he found himself crying out "Mother!" "Mother!" and then suddenly he felt courage, as he strikingly put it, "loom" up in him.

I think, without boasting, we may say that it is characteristic of both armies that whereas the German soldiers are played into action by a band, the British march into action singing. During the present campaign they seem to have preferred "It's a long way to Tipperary," and it is on record that an Irish regiment sang that stirring old song "God save Ireland." The Manchester Regiment sing "Killaloe," the Rifle Brigade are fond of that fine old ballad "Colonel Coote Manningham's a very good man." The Fusiliers have their own song, "Fighting with the Royal Fusiliers."

We must not allow ourselves to forget that other regiments of our cavalry were also engaged in this

great battle, among them the 18th Hussars and the 4th **Dragoons**, who performed noble feats of valour and suffered severely.

Another historic "scrap" was that between a regiment of Irish infantry and three regiments of German cavalry splendidly horsed, equipped, and armed. The Irishmen, who had been joking and smoking, rose up to meet the on-coming rush of horsemen, and one who was there said they looked like a bristling bulwark of giants, holding weapons of steel in steel grips.

For a few minutes there was an awful chaos of horses, soldiers grey and soldiers yellow, glittering lances and bayonets, the automatic spit of machine guns, the flashes of musketry. Amidst it all the men in khaki stood steadfast. Grimly and without budging they threw back, at the bayonet's point, in utter demoralisation, the cavalry of the Kaiser. While they fought they sang "God save Ireland," and "Whistle to me, said I."

Martial songs have always had a very great effect on armies taking the field. The British have a great many battle songs. The French have only the "Marseillaise." The most famous German battle songs are "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," and "Die Wacht am Rhein."

The marching song of the troops who fought under Marlborough was "Lillibullero."

In the American Civil War there were many splendid songs sung by the men going into action, of which perhaps the best known is "John Brown's body lies a'mouldering in the grave." It is probable that nowadays, invoking the shade of Lincoln, Americans would swing into battle singing "We are coming, Father Abraham."

There is a touching story to the effect that on one occasion when the two great opposing armies—the strenuous North and the chivalrous South—were actually only separated by a river, the soldiers on one side began singing "Annie Laurie," and suddenly the refrain was heard floating over from the other side. Long after the deadly conflict which took place the next day was forgotten, the incident of the song was remembered in both Northern and Southern homes.

The instinctive fear felt and shown by the Germans of our cavalry, and the great deeds of valour performed by them in the Battle of Mons, recalls an exciting incident which occurred in the Indian Mutiny, when what was known as the Volunteer Cavalry, raised by Sir Henry



Lawrence from among the unattached officers and civilians of Lucknow, did a marvellous feat of arms while on their way to that beleaguered city.

There came a moment when Lawrence saw himself in danger of being surrounded. He gave the order to retreat, a retreat which soon degenerated into a rout. On approaching the Kokral stream which ran across the road to Lucknow, about four hundred rebel cavalry were seen prepared to dispute the passage of the one bridge on which depended the safety of the fugitives. The situation was saved by the Volunteer Cavalry. Without a moment's hesitation some thirty of them with their commander, Captain Radcliffe, at their head, hurled themselves at the dense mass in their front, and before they could strike a blow the enemy broke and fled, leaving the bridge free. To this splendid charge alone was due the fact that a remnant of the British force finally reached Lucknow in safety.

Let me recall in the same connection another tale of the Mutiny. It was during the night of the 19th of June, when an especially determined attack was made on the British position outside Delhi. Hope Grant, in command of the cavalry, kept back the fiercest attacks of the enemy

on the rear of the British camp. At last, unhorsed, surrounded by the foe, he must have fallen, had not his sowar, or native orderly, Rooper Khan, ridden up to him saying, "Take my horse, sir, it is your only chance of safety!" Hope Grant refused, but taking a firm grip of the animal's tail he was dragged by his sowar out of the mass of fighting men.

The British cavalry have been celebrated from the days of Julius Cæsar. In his famous Commentaries, Cæsar remarks of his brave British foes, "They display in battle the speed of horse with the firmness of infantry; and by daily practice and exercise attain to such expertness that they are accustomed, even on a declining and steep place, to check their horses at full speed and manage to turn them in an instant."

The British cavalryman regards his horse as his friend. It is recorded that after each of the great cavalry charges at Mons the men, though in considerable danger of being "sniped," went round and shot the poor wounded horses, so that they might be at once put out of their misery.

Those of you who have ponies of your own may like to hear how kindly and tenderly our battle-horses are

treated. The Army Veterinary Corps, officered by fully trained veterinary surgeons, always accompanies our troops in the field. Immediately after an engagement these officers attend to those horses which are only slightly wounded, and send them along to a horse hospital if it be necessary.

As to what care horses should have on active service, opinions differ curiously. In a letter written by the Duke of Wellington to a cavalry officer, he begged him when in the field not to allow his men to dress their horses' skins "You have no conception how much warmth the animals derive from the dust which accumulates in their coats."

Cavalry horses love the stir and din, even perhaps the danger, of battle. The story goes that one day a milk-woman passing in her cart near where a regiment of cavalry was manœuvring, heard the trumpets sound. Her horse pricked up his ears and started off at full gallop towards the sentries, dragging the cart after it in spite of the poor woman's efforts. It did not stop till it had joined the ranks !

We will now go back to the Battle of Mons—to the firing line, and to a remarkable act of gallantry performed

by Captain Grenfell. The tale, as told by a corporal, cannot be improved on :

“ The gunners had all been killed by shrapnel, and there were the guns with no one to look after them, and a good chance that the Germans might get them. The horses were safe enough, but there was no one to harness them. Captain Grenfell stepped out. ‘ We’ve got to get those guns back,’ he said. ‘ Who’s going to volunteer for the job ? ’ He had a couple of dozen of us before he had finished speaking. Since our chaps have seen him in the firing line, they would go anywhere with him.

“ Well, we went out. There were bullets flying all round us and shrapnel bursting all over the place, but Captain Grenfell was as cool as if he was on parade. ‘ It’s all right,’ he said. ‘ They can’t hit us. Come along ! ’ We got to the guns all right, hitched up the horses, and brought them back, and only three of our chaps were hit. It’s a wonder the whole lot of us were not wiped out.”

It was later in that same day that this gallant Captain Grenfell was wounded. He got a bullet in the thigh, and a couple of his fingers were hurt. His men brought him back from the firing line and sent for an ambulance

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to take him away, but while they were waiting for the ambulance a motor-car came along. "That's exactly what I want," said the Captain. "What's the use of an ambulance to me? Take me back to the firing line." And he got into the motor-car and went back, leaving the doctors to make what they liked of it!

Here is another story, of which the hero this time is a cavalry sergeant. This man had been badly wounded three times, but was still going on fighting. Suddenly he heard a corporal shouting to be taken out of the line. Turning round, he bound up his comrade's wounds, set him on his own horse and sent him back out of the way. Then, regardless of his own condition, he limped along to his regiment, and started fighting again.

And now for a very pathetic little incident.

In the middle of the battle, in a beautiful cornfield from which the men fighting could see all over the country, one of the drivers of a battery was badly wounded. He asked to see the colours before he died. His officer told him that the guns were *his* colours, and he answered: "Yes, that is true. Tell the drivers to keep their eyes on their guns, for if we lose our guns we lose our colours."

These brave drivers have the strongest feeling of affection and loyalty for their guns.

On one occasion, also at Mons, two drivers brought a gun out of action, the shells bursting all round them. They had noticed that the gunners had all been killed, so they walked their horses down to save the gun. One driver held the horses under a fearful fire while the other "limbered up." The gun was rushed safely back, neither men nor horses being hit. Their comrades, watching them from the trenches, thought it quite impossible for them to escape death, for shot and shell were ploughing the ground up all round them.

So many were the brave, chivalrous, and merciful deeds in this battle that it is difficult to make a choice. I should like, however, to tell you of one such performed by a lieutenant of the "A" Company of the 1st Cheshires, whose nickname is "Winkpop."

He was shot through his right leg, and on the road some of his men cut off his boots and tried to bandage his wounds. As he rose to his feet, he saw a private in distress about fifteen yards away. Seizing a rifle he hobbled forward and managed to bring him in on his back under a murderous fire from the enemy.

This gallant deed recalls a splendid act of valour performed by two non-commissioned officers, who were among the first group of V.C. heroes. They were among the very few to return unscathed from the Charge of the Light Brigade. Regardless of their own danger, they remained by one of their wounded officers, and at last, by making a bandy-chair with their arms, they actually brought him in safety to the British lines.

The cool courage of the doctors and of the ambulance men whose duty it is to rescue and then to attend to the wounded must never be lost sight of in what may be called the more showy deeds performed by our soldiers and sailors.

The story you have just read recalls the astonishing coolness and bravery of the man who, I believe, was the first doctor to receive the V.C.—Surgeon Mouat of the Inniskillings. He dressed the wound, under fire, of Captain Morris, of the 17th Lancers, who had just taken part in the Charge of the Light Brigade, thereby saving his patient's life.

The Middlesex Regiment, who bear the glorious nickname of "The Die Hards," greatly distinguished them-

selves on those eventful days, August 23 and 24. They were much pleased by a communication received by them, containing a statement by Mr. J. B. Dolphin, British Vice-Consul at Liège, in which the following passage occurred :

“ A German general said that he had never dreamt of such magnificent bravery as that displayed by them. The accuracy of their firing was a revelation : their coolness was wonderful, and their trench work splendid.”

As you will see later in this book, “ The Die Hards ” also distinguished themselves in one of the later battles of the war.

In the first public speech made in England by a British officer wounded at Mons, Captain Buchanan Dunlop, he paid a fine tribute to the French non-combatants, as people who are not soldiers are called in a country at war :

“ I think England might get a very good lesson from the inhabitants of France and Belgium. All the way as we proceeded through that country all the inhabitants turned out and did all they could for us. They brought us coffee, bread and butter, cigarettes, and anything they could think of. The ladies even turned out balls



of string in case the men might find them useful, and handkerchiefs. We advanced up through this country, and then had to retire through it. You can imagine our feelings going back through the same country that we had previously traversed. This did not make the slightest difference to the way we were treated by the inhabitants. They brought us coffee and other things as before.

“ Fugitives flying from their homes were eager to give us of the food which they were carrying back for their own consumption. What struck us the whole time was the thought, If this was England? What an awful thing it would be to have an invading army in England, and everything happening here that is now going on in France! ”

Captain Buchanan Dunlop also told two splendid little stories to show what pluck and fight our men have in them :

“ I was talking to an officer of my own regiment in town yesterday. He was also wounded, and he told me about a fight on Wednesday week when one of his men lying just in front of him under heavy shell fire, turned to him and said : ‘ Sir, may I retire ? ’ ‘ Why ? ’ asked

the officer. 'Sir,' replied the man, 'I have been hit three times.' "

Here is the other little incident :

" On the very first day we were holding a canal bank, and during the night we had orders to retire, having held off the enemy all day. We were to blow up the bridges. By some mishap a sergeant with ten men was left on the wrong side of that canal with the Germans about two hundred yards in front. We could hear the Germans talking. The next morning, when we called the roll, we expressed sorrow at thinking that this sergeant and his men must have been captured. But in the morning, when they found they were cut off, what did they do ? They did not put up their hands, but blazed away at the Germans, with the result that the Germans fled and the sergeant and his men got away."

The following story shows how many sides there are to a modern battle.

It was at Mons that a fight occurred for the possession of a canal bridge, and a handful of British soldiers held at bay the enemy, who were in force a hundred yards away. The odds were overwhelmingly against our soldiers,

and the Germans were preparing to rush the bridge, when an engineer sergeant perceived that if the enemy succeeded our men would be cut off.

Urging the men to concentrate their fire on one particular point, this cool, brave man proceeded to dynamite the bridge. But as time was short he could only employ a few inches of fuse. This meant that he went to certain death. Sure enough, he and the bridge blew up together, and as an eye-witness quaintly said, "Another Victoria Cross was saved."

A young Isle of Wight gunner named Butchers, from the pretty village of Brading, was the hero of a magnificent episode.

A half battery in rather an exposed position was galling the enemy by the accuracy of its aim. Several of the German batteries therefore made a combined attack on it. It was a fight between a David and half-a-dozen Goliaths. One by one its guns were silenced. The men who had been serving them were shot down till at last only Butchers was left. He went on doing his best, working steadily and to all appearance calmly, till an officer called him away.

One of the first letters received from the fighting line contained the following striking tribute from the writer, a private, to one of his officers :

“ You know I have often spoken of Captain ——, and what a fine fellow he was. There was no braver man on the field. He got knocked over early with a piece of a shell, which smashed his leg. He must have been in great pain, but kneeling on one knee he was cheerful and kept saying, ‘ My bonnie boys, make sure of your man.’ When he was taken away on the ambulance he shouted, ‘ Keep cool and mark your man.’ ”

You have already heard how splendidly our soldiers were welcomed by the women and children when they landed in France. Well, during the Battle of Mons the French peasant women showed their gratitude in an even more practical way. It was very hot during those hours of fierce fighting, and these valiant women brought water, and luscious cooling fruit, right into our trenches and firing line. “ I can assure you they are the bravest souls I have ever met,” wrote a British private to his mother.

During the Battle of Mons the Germans may be credited with having performed at least one act of kindness.

Lieutenant Irwin, of the South Lancashire Regiment, was wounded by shrapnel at the end of the day's hard fighting. He lay all night in a turnip field. In the morning some German soldiers discovered him and one of them brought a bundle of hay for Mr. Irwin to lie on till the stretcher came up. He was taken to Valenciennes, and the German commander most kindly allowed him to write home to his friends. There were many French doctors and nurses in this hospital, and the German officers behaved well to them also.

Very different was the experience of Private Charles Baker, of the 20th Hussars.

After being wounded, he was taken into a cottage which had been turned into a temporary hospital and where there were already twenty men, including three Germans, in charge of an English doctor. Suddenly this poor little hospital was raided by a party of fifty Germans, all more or less drunk. Roughly they ordered the British wounded to say where their regiment was, but, as Private Charles Baker wrote home to his people, "Not one of us would give the game away." Thereupon they were threatened with death, and as Private Baker very honestly remarks: "I can tell you I began to

shake. I was really afraid then. I thought my number was up ! ”

Suddenly a most unexpected thing happened. The three wounded Germans implored their comrades to spare the British, pointing out how very kindly they had been treated by the English doctor. So the fifty Germans went off as quickly as they had come in, and the next day the wounded were all moved to another hospital.

Those of you who know anything of the Crimean War are aware what a terrific battle was Inkerman. The British losses at Mons were the highest for any single battle since Inkerman. On the other hand, there were probably ten times greater forces engaged at Mons than at Inkerman, when the numbers on either side were fairly even.

Now one last word as to where this battle was fought.

Very few English people who had not actually been there were familiar with the name of Mons, and yet the town which gave its name to the first big battle of this war, is not only the centre of the French “ Black Country,” but it has had a long and romantic history, and was founded by Julius Cæsar.

A certain King of Spain, to whom Mons once belonged, must have been very like the Kaiser. The latter, as we know, has with magnificent lavishness, bestowed the Prussian V.C., the great decoration of the Iron Cross, on some fifty thousand of his men. This King of Spain was once so pleased with the inhabitants of Mons that he conferred a peerage on every member of the Town Council !

## CHAPTER V

### THE GREAT RETREAT

No thought was there of dastard flight  
Linked in the serried phalanx tight,  
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,  
As fearlessly, and well.

SCOTT.

**Y**OU will remember that the Battle of Mons was fought on the 23rd of August, a Sunday.

On the Monday the whole world, with the exception of Germany and Austria, heard with dismay that the famous Belgian fort of Namur had fallen, after holding out as long as it could against the great German guns.

Now Namur was in a sense the key to France, so you can understand how very very serious a matter for the Allies, as the French and British forces were henceforth to be called, was the fall of this great fortress. In these days it is rather curious to remember that fourteen British regiments, including the Grenadier Guards, the Scots Guards, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, the Coldstreams, the



Royal Irish, and the King's Own Scottish Borderers, bear the honorary distinction, "Namur, 1695," upon their colours, for having captured this stronghold two hundred and nineteen years ago.

Through the town of Namur flows the Meuse, a lovely river, shared by France and Belgium, which has already seen some of the hardest fighting of this war.

On the banks of the Meuse, Joan of Arc, as a little girl, must often have played, for in France it laves the village of Domrémy. When it reaches Belgium, this storied river flows by the grave of an extraordinary man who in some ways had certain affinities with Joan of Arc—I mean Peter the Hermit, who is buried in the gardens of the old Abbey of Neufmoustier.

The most beautiful description of the Meuse at Namur was written by William Wordsworth :

“ Is this the stream whose cities, heights, and plains,  
War's favourite playground are, with crimson stains  
Familiar as the morn with pearly dew's ?  
The morn, that now, along the silver Meuse,  
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains  
To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,

Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews  
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes  
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,  
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,  
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade,  
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise  
From the smooth meadow-ground serene and still !”

Terrible fighting took place over that “smooth meadow-ground,” and at last the fortress surrendered.

Now let me tell you something of a happy and inspiring nature.

While Namur was falling, the gallant little French fortress of Longwy was holding out against the Germans, and that though it was what is now called a fortress of the second class.

Longwy has always been regarded as of considerable importance, owing to its position on the Franco-German frontier. In the middle of the Great Revolution it was taken by Germans, and its fall very much upset the citizens of Paris. It put up a splendid fight in 1815, and was then besieged for three full months before it fell.

In the Franco-Prussian War it resisted for one week.

But in this war it held out, against infinitely greater numbers and far more formidable siege artillery than in 1870, for twenty-four days! The enemy congratulated the French officer who had conducted the defence on his bravery and skill.

The fall of Namur forced the Allies back, and it was then that there began the British rearguard movement which was so brilliantly, skilfully, and successfully conducted by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien that it is considered worthy to rank with the great retreat of Sir John Moore at Corunna.

I should like here to tell you something of the soldier to whom Sir John French paid a grand tribute in his official despatches concerning those first momentous days of the War.

General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien is a younger son of a family which has given many distinguished soldiers to the Empire, and for generations has held feudal sway over the Scilly Isles. Those of you who know Cornwall may have visited the beautiful tropical gardens surrounding his old home.

Before he obtained his high command in the Expedi-

tionary Force, Smith-Dorrien had seen a great deal of fighting, and one likes to quote now what he once said during the South African War :

“ Give me a thousand Colonials, men well acquainted with the rifle and expert in horsemanship ; let me train them for six months ; and I shall then be ready to lead them against an equal number of men drawn from any Continental army with absolute confidence.”

Sir Horace has also had experience with another type of splendid soldier of the Empire ; for at one time he commanded the 4th Infantry Division of the Indian Army, which includes some of the finest troops in the native ranks.

During the South African War, Smith-Dorrien performed one of the pluckiest deeds ever done by a British officer.

His brigade was moving forward to take a main Boer position, when two battalions, one of the Gordons and the other of the C.I.V.'s, lost touch. The Gordons, to put it shortly, rushed up the hill at Doornkop with such impetuosity that they got cut off, and the General saw that there was great danger of their being surrounded. Without wasting a moment, and under an awful fire which

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was being kept up by an invisible foe, he galloped straight across the enemy's front and turned the Highlanders back.

When Smith-Dorrien rode in unscathed, a brother officer protested against the awful risk he had run. "Someone had to stop the Gordons! I couldn't send anyone else to face that fire, could I?" was his only answer.

It must have been hard for so brave a man to have to organise a retreat, but he knew that it had to be done—and done fighting.

You will have heard of—you may even have known—someone whose name was included in the list sent home after a battle as "missing."

Now there is something terrible and disturbing in the thought of a man being missing. It makes one feel that anything may have happened to him. But we must always remember that this disturbing word does not necessarily mean that any harm has come to the soldier in question, still less that he is killed. It very often means that he did not hear the order to retreat and so was left behind in the trenches to be taken prisoner by the enemy. Not a pleasant fate, but from the point of view of those

who love him, better than if he had fallen, as the French proudly put it, on the Field of Honour. Also it is well to remember that the number of the missing, especially in what is called a rearguard action, is always greater than the number of killed or wounded.

A retreat has been well described as disheartening and painful, but in strategy it is an operation like any other. Very often, as in the case of Smith-Dorrien, it is the way to win in the end.

What is strategy? Strategy is another name for arranging your forces like chessmen on a chess-board with the object of winning in the end. Great strategists are born, not made. Cæsar was a great strategist, so was Napoleon, and so was Lord Roberts. Just as a composer can write a piece of music without the help of a piano or any other instrument, so the born strategist can work out the plan of a battle, and even make a shrewd guess as to who is going to win, when sitting in his study with a good map before him.

It may interest you to know that before each of his great battles Napoleon spent the night in his tent studying a number of large maps laid out on the floor. Lying flat on

his stomach, and with a little stick in his hand, he would work out the dispositions of his troops and of the enemy. When he had made up his mind what was going to happen, down to every detail, he would call in his generals and explain to each of them exactly what he was to do the next day. His generals soon found that though he was not always certain what his own side would do, he could always foresee the plans of the enemy.

I have already spoken of Sir John Moore at Corunna. At the time that great soldier made his famous retreat, he was much criticised, but now all military historians regard it as having been a most wonderful piece of work, if only because it forced Napoleon to alter his whole plan of campaign.

Just as General von Kluck wished to obey the Kaiser and destroy the British Army, so Napoleon was most eager to destroy Sir John Moore's forces. Fresh from a series of brilliant victories, at the head of a splendid host, Napoleon dashed into Spain, but Sir John Moore, by his masterly retreat, defeated all his plans.

The first of his contemporaries to realise the splendid thing Moore had done was Napoleon himself. While the British commanders—Moore's own contemporaries and

even his own friends—were criticising the dead man, for he fell at Corunna, Napoleon was putting on record his unbounded admiration of his foe.

How our gallant soldiers felt when ordered to fall back was graphically described by Private Harman, of the King's Royal Rifles :

“ We did not like the order to retire, for we knew we were doing better than the Germans, and inflicting heavy losses upon them. Our officers also knew we were disappointed. On the fifth day of the retreat—which was the last I was in before being knocked out—our commanding officer came round and spoke to us, saying, ‘ Stick it, boys, stick it ! To-morrow we shall go the other way and advance.’ ”

And in time, as we shall see, they did advance, but before that glad moment came they had to retreat, fighting.

Listen to this, written by another private :

“ On one occasion seven of us were left to cover a Maxim gun while it was being limbered up to take some other position farther back. We had to take up the position of the gun, and we kept firing rapid so as to make it appear that the Maxim gun was still there. The Ger-



mans were shelling the position on both sides of us. Then we had to go at the double for about five miles to catch up to the others. It was a hard jog-trot all the way."

It was during this skilful retreat that there came the first of those wonderful duels in the air which established, as Sir John French so well put it, the personal supremacy of our flying men, and proved that they are quicker and sharper in the air than those of the enemy :

"Our man got above the German, who tried his hardest to escape," wrote an eye-witness. "The Englishman was firing his revolver, and the German seemed to plane down in good order, but when he got to the ground he was dead."

Little by little, in some cases not for many weeks, came through stories of the daring and quenchless heroism which illumined the dark night of the great retreat.

A solitary grave, each day strewn with fresh flowers, is the last resting-place of an English soldier who, quite alone, fought his last fight till overwhelmed by numbers.

During the first rearguard action he had strayed from his comrades, and fallen exhausted from fatigue. Unable to find them, he took up his quarters in a deserted carriage.

Thirty-six hours later the Germans appeared and fired at him. Undeterred by the fact that he was utterly alone, he replied, and such was his determination and accuracy of aim that he accounted for six German officers, one of them a general, before he fell under a volley.

The French from a village near by buried him where he had fought, erected a cross, and in honour of his gallantry, laid fresh flowers each day on his grave.

His name was David M. Kay, and he belonged to the 5th Lancers.

Hearken to another exploit, of which the hero was Corporal Shaw, who for three years was the twelve-stone wrestling champion of the Army in Ireland.

He saw a comrade in difficulty with his horse in the first retirement from Mons. The pack had slipped round to its side, and the rider was endeavouring to straighten it. Shaw dashed up and helped the soldier to straighten the pack. Bullets rained round the plucky champion, one darted into the soft part of his shoulder, another killed one of his comrades near by, but the man he was helping rode off clear.

## CHAPTER VI

### CAMBRAI, LANDRÉCIES, ST. QUENTIN

He, who in concert with an earthly string  
Of Britain's acts would sing,  
He with enraptured voice will tell  
Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;  
Of One that 'mid the failing never failed—  
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed  
Shall represent her labouring with an eye  
Of circumspect humanity;  
Shall show her clothed with strength and skill  
All martial duties to fulfil;  
Firm as a rock in stationary fight;  
In motion rapid, as the lightning's gleam;  
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at midnight  
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream—  
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!  
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

WORDSWORTH.

**T**HE first place to which our troops fell back (fighting hard all the way) was Cambrai, where cambric was first made, and where, in days of peace, much exquisitely fine linen is still woven. Cambrai and Le Cateau are practically one, and a very fierce engagement took place there.

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Here I must tell you of a brave Englishwoman who had lived for fifteen years at Le Cateau. She kept a little restaurant, and during these terrible hours when such hard fighting was going on close to the town she went on cooking eggs and bacon for her fellow-countrymen. Both her French friends and the English soldiers begged her to leave the town, but, as only answer, she observed that she wouldn't move "for all the Germans."

It is to be hoped that her little house was saved, but the English soldier, who told the story of her pluck, fears that it must have been destroyed.

At the Battle of Cambrai, the charge of the 12th Lancers and Royal Scots Greys is said to have been the equal of anything seen at Waterloo. Indeed finer; for at Waterloo, in one cavalry charge at any rate, the men, after their first success, got out of hand, went too far, and suffered grievously in consequence.

An heroic passage of arms, in which the 2nd Battalion Connaught Rangers were concerned, was splendidly described by a private in a letter home :

"It was understood we were to pass the night at Cambrai, but we got a report that the Germans were

approaching, and were close on us. Every man was called to stand to arms, and soon the German shells were falling amongst us. Our colonel was a perfect gentleman, and under his gallant lead the Rangers set a bold front. In the midst of the bursting of the German projectiles his clear, stentorian voice rang out : ‘ Rangers of Connaught, all eyes are upon you to-night. While you have fists and a heart within you, charge them. If you don’t, never face me in this world nor in the next ! ’

“ Our boys were greatly encouraged by the bravery shown by Colonel Abercrombie. Bayonets were fixed, but at the sight of the steel the enemy turned about. We were, however, completely outnumbered, and in a subsequent attack some of our men, including our brave, commander, were taken prisoners.”

It must have been that same night that a brave deed was done for which the hero, had he survived, would surely have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

The British took the offensive against the Germans who were holding a bridge spanning a canal. It was very dark, and when our men reached an embankment running sharply down to the river, several failed to secure a foothold, and fell into the water.

Four of the men, who were unable to swim, were in imminent danger of drowning, when Corporal Brindall, an excellent swimmer, plunged into the river and rescued all four in turn. He was clambering up the embankment himself, when a German shell exploded near him, killing him instantly.

Even in the stir and din of battle funny and curious little incidents are always taking place.

Take the odd case of Private Joseph Davis, of the Dorset Regiment, a well-known footballer, who, at Cambrai, received a shrapnel bullet in the shoulder.

Now, strange to say, Mr. Davis has tattooed on his chest a gorgeous portrait of Queen Victoria. While he lay wounded on the field of battle, his one dread was that the Germans would see his chest and want to have a dig at the Queen ! Happily his fears were not realised.

It was at Cambrai also that another amusing and most unexpected little incident took place.

An English governess who happened to be spending a holiday in a village on the route of our Army rushed for protection to the British lines during a skirmish. For four days she remained with the troops, marching,

bivouacking, and sheltering during fights, until she was placed on a conveyance which ensured her safe passage to a port.

During her enforced visit to our gallant troops, she was continually exposed to danger, but she maintained an iron indifference to the inconveniences of her situation, and the soldiers met with such good luck in those four days that they came to regard the lady as a mascot, and were genuinely sorry when she departed.

A terrible toll of death was exacted during this awful battle, and as at the Battle of Mons, so many were the gallant and noble deeds that it is difficult to make a choice.

To Lieutenant Noel, a young officer killed in action, the following moving tribute was paid :

“Always cheerful, ever thoughtful for others, the best of companions with the kindest of hearts, Jack Noel endeared himself to all who knew him, and those who were privileged to be called his friends were bound to him by ties far stronger than those of common friendship.”

His death was a singularly heroic one, and in wonderful keeping with what we know of his life. A wounded corporal of his regiment, who was near him when he fell, says that “Lieutenant Noel, despite the fact that he was

hit in or near his left eye by a shot that broke the half of his field-glasses, promptly picked up his glasses again, and, finding the right half of them still workable, continued to direct the fire of his platoon with his right eye, until a few minutes later he was killed by a shot in his left temple."

Not the British only fought at Cambrai; deeds of unparalleled valour were done by the French, and also by France's Arab troops, the Turcos. It was at Cambrai that the Turcos first saw fire. They were singled out, five hundred of them, to do a desperate piece of work on which the fate of thousands of men depended.

Straining as if at a leash, they waited for the order to advance. At last it came. They swung round and faced the foe. Onward they went, right up to the guns, and against what seemed to be an impregnable line of trenches.

Of the five hundred, only twelve survived; of the twelve, only one was unwounded. But the enemy's guns were silenced, and the Germans had fled from their trenches. The men who fell were buried shoulder to shoulder as they fought.

The French peasant women, as we have seen, are wonderfully brave in the matter of going under fire.



One of these showed herself possessed of a quieter type of courage, but courage nevertheless, during the retreat. Hear the tale as told by a British officer :

“ After the Battle of Mons we were billeted at a large farmhouse, the occupants of which did not seem very pleased to see us. We had not touched any eatables for several hours, and I made the housewife understand that we wanted some food. She looked at us in a way which was not altogether an expression of friendliness, and, pointing at the table, round which a number of working-men were gathered, to whom she was serving their meals, she said, ‘ *Après les ouvriers.*’—‘ After my work-people.’

“ We waited patiently till the men had finished their meal, and then asked once more for food. But the woman merely remarked, ‘ *Après nous.*’ ‘ After us.’ And she and her husband subsequently prepared to eat their supper. It is rather trying to see somebody making an attack on a hearty meal while one has not tasted any food for a long time. So I demanded, in the name of the King, that we should be supplied with foodstuff immediately, the more so that the woman seemed so unwilling to grant our wishes. The only answer she made was that, if we were in want of food, we should have to look for it ourselves and try to prepare it.

“ The situation was rather awkward, and I was wondering why these French peasantry were so extremely unkind towards British soldiers !

“ Suddenly it entered my mind that perhaps she thought we were Germans ! At the same time I had something like a happy thought in order to prove that we were not. One of our men, a tall, heavy chap, who was still outside the house, was ordered to substitute a German helmet for his own cap, and to knock at the door. He did, the door was opened, we dashed forward, and made ‘ the German ’ a prisoner.

“ The whole scene changed all of a sudden. The whole family embraced us, almost choked us. Food and wine and dainties were supplied at once, and we had a most glorious time.”

August 26, a Wednesday, saw perhaps the fiercest hand-to-hand fighting which had yet taken place. All day our gallant men fought at Landrécies against fearful odds. There two companies of the Coldstream Guards held 3000 Germans at bay for four hours. Lieut. Percy Wyndham (a direct descendant of the great Irish rebel-hero, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and of his wife, the lovely Frenchwoman who lives in romance under the name of

Pamela) stood up and fired a hundred rounds from his revolver so that his men could form up quietly behind him. He then shouted out to them : “ Fall in, and die like Coldstreams ! ” This gallant young soldier fell in action a week later at Soissons.

Listen to the heroic end of yet another officer of the Coldstreams. Lieutenant Allan William George Campbell lost his life through a successful attempt to rescue a comrade who was in a worse plight than himself. He had already been wounded, when he noticed Captain Tollemache fall. Together with Colonel Ponsonby he went out and carried Captain Tollemache over a mile under fire to a position of safety ; but while he was doing so, he was again terribly wounded, and he only lived a few days.

We get a touching glimpse of Lieut. G. C. Wynn, killed in action at Landrécies, in a letter from one of Mr. Wynn’s men, written to the young officer’s father :

“ The last day he was alive we had got a cup of tea in the trenches, and we asked him to have one. He said, ‘ No, drink it yourselves, you are in want of it ’ ; and then with a smile he added, ‘ We have to hold the trenches to-day.’ At Mons we had been fighting all day, and someone brought

a sack of pears and two loaves of bread. Lieut. Wynn accepted only one pear and a very little bread. We noticed this. I had a small bottle of pickles in my haversack and asked him to have some. But it was the usual answer, 'You require them yourself!' He died doing his duty like the officer and gentleman he was."

In a letter written from hospital after this engagement, a corporal told of how he had been saved from a lingering death on the field :

"They blazed at us from 350 yards, and as fast as we shot one lot down, another came up. At last I got a bit of shell in the calf of my leg. We retired all together. My captain put me on his horse and led it for miles, until we got to a train."

St. Quentin, with which will ever be associated the name of a terrible battle, one of the three rearguard actions in which our army fought with such splendid bravery and against such fearful odds, is a beautiful old town. It was part of the dowry of Mary Queen of Scots, and all through her long, sad captivity, she still received money from the faithful city.

Long before this great war, St. Quentin saw terrific

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fighting. Spaniards, British, Germans and Flemings there defeated the French, who were led by the brave Coligny and the famous Constable Montmorency. That old Battle of St. Quentin was fought on St. Lawrence's Day, and it was because he believed that God had helped him to win this victory that the sinister King of Spain, Philip II, built the Escorial, a marvellous Spanish palace formed in the shape of a gridiron.

The great charge of the Black Watch took place at St. Quentin. The men had marched close on eighty miles before word ran through the ranks they were going into action. Unmeasured was their joy! At once they put themselves in good skirmishing order, and, under cover of the guns, got closer and closer to the enemy. Not till they were within a hundred yards of the German lines did they receive the longed for command.

The Black Watch and the Scots Greys charged together. The Scots Greys galloped forward, the Black Watch hanging to their stirrups. On the horses flew through a cloud of bullets, but every sound was drowned by the thunder of the horses' hoofs as they careered wildly on. Saddles emptied quickly as the charge closed on the German lines,

and man and horse were on the German gunners before they knew where they were. Down the enemy went in hundreds, and still the deadly work of the bayonet continued. Soon the Germans broke and fled "like rabbits before the shot of a gun." It is said that there were 2000 British against 20,000 Germans. Close on 4000 prisoners were taken, as well as an immense number of guns.

Many years ago a famous historian of the Scottish Highlands wrote concerning the Highlander words which hold as good to-day as they did in the '45. "He is taught to consider courage as the most honourable virtue, cowardice the most disgraceful failing ; to venerate and obey his chief, and to devote himself to his native country and clan ; thus prepared to be a soldier, he is ready to follow wherever honour and duty call him."

There is a fine little story concerning the men of the Black Watch on their first visit to England. The then King had never seen a Highlander at close quarters, and as he wished to do so, three men who were noted for their dexterity in the broad-sword exercise and with the lochaber axe were sent to St. James's Palace. So pleased was the King with their performance that he gave them each a guinea, which they in turn gave to the porter of the gate

as they went out. "Doubtless," they observed, "the King has mistaken our character and condition in our own country."

It is interesting to note that it was the gallantry of the Highlanders in covering the retreat of the Allied Forces at Fontenoy which received the special praise of the Commander-in-Chief. Fontenoy was their maiden experience of a foreign foe.

I want you specially to remember what our soldiers in this war have owed to what is called the Army Service Corps. You will recollect my telling you that Napoleon said an army marched on its stomach. All that is necessary for the physical well-being of our men is done quickly, quietly, and very bravely, by the officers and men of the Army Service Corps. Their adventures are often as perilous and exciting as those which befall the fighting soldier. They all have to bear the weight of considerable responsibility and ever-present anxiety. The enemy always does his best to harass, intercept, and, if possible, destroy the food which is on its way to our men. Not food only for the men, but forage for the horses is under the care of this wonderful Corps.

Never was the triumph of their organisation shown to such advantage as during the fighting retreat with which we are now concerned.

On one occasion the Germans, who, remember, were close on the heels of the British motors and waggons, were particularly anxious to get hold of a train of forty motor lorries stocked with food and ammunition. In addition to these were also several hundred horsed waggons similarly loaded.

At last, when close to St. Quentin, which was to be the next great stand, the men in charge of this huge convoy were informed that the Uhlans were only a mile away. The colonel in command made certain inquiries. To his dismay, he learnt that not only his men but their horses also were so dead tired that they could not go on any more. He, therefore, made up his mind to stay in the little village where they found themselves, and if attacked to put up a stout fight.

Wearied though they were, each was sent with a loaded rifle to a place on the line he was to defend. The waggons were all drawn up in the funny little narrow winding streets which make a French village not unlike an old Scottish town.



In a very short time everything was in order to receive the enemy.

I have not yet told you much of the fate of ordinary people during a great war, but you can fancy for yourselves how the inhabitants of this village felt when they realised that their home was about to be made into a battle-ground.

The wise colonel of our forces advised that all the village people should go into the church, and there the curé arranged to hold a service. The lady who generally played the organ eagerly gave her services, and soon the English soldiers guarding the convoys were heartened by hearing the sweet singing of French and Latin hymns.

Time went on. The horses got very restless, and a stampede was feared. Had that happened all would have been lost. But it did not happen, and at last day broke. No attack had been delivered, and it was clear that the enemy had gone to the right or left of the village, pressing onward in the belief that the British convoy was ahead.

Yet another exciting incident, which shows the kind of adventures the Army Service Corps takes as being all part of its day's work.

A convoy had been drawn up some way from the firing line, and in the early morning rations were just about to

be issued to a brigade of artillery who were going into action at 3 A.M., when the word went forth that the convoy was being quietly surrounded by a troop of German cavalry.

At once it was arranged that if it could not be got away it must be burnt. But before doing that the officers resolved to make a push for it.

Lorries and horses started off at top speed till they got to a railway bridge. There all the transport, with the exception of thirty motor lorries, passed over in safety. Another determined effort was made, and out of the thirty, twenty-eight got over safely. Then the bridge was blown up. A moment later the remaining two lorries were in the hands of the Germans, together with two officers and eight men, who were, we may suppose, taken prisoners.

A wonderful stand was also made by our retreating troops at Tournai, when 700 British soldiers resisted 5000 Uhlans. They stood their ground to a man, till of the 700 less than half remained. Even then there was no panic. Calmly, harassing their pursuers with a murderous fire, "all that was left of them" retreated with the wounded, their convoy intact. As for the guns, though some were lost, many more were put out

of action. The enemy showed reckless bravery, hurling themselves on to the very muzzles of the British field guns.

A soldier always admires a brave man, no matter what his uniform is. Here is a fine tribute paid by a wounded British artilleryman to the enemy :

“ The grandest thing I saw out there was the fight of a handful of good fighting men in German uniforms. These chaps were the last of a regiment to cross a stream under fiendish rifle and artillery fire.

“ They were hotly pursued by French cavalry and infantry, and when they saw that it was all up the remnant made for a little hill and gathered round the regimental flag to fight to the last. The French closed round them, and called on them to surrender, but not they ! They stood there back to back until the last man went down with the flag in his grasp and a dozen bullet wounds in his body.

“ Then the flag was captured by the French, but there was no shouting over the victory, and every soldier who passed that way and knew the story of those brave chaps bared his head to the memory of brave men.”

During the last stage of the great retreat, the British

fought splendidly at Compiègne. It was there that three non-commissioned officers in the Royal Horse Artillery won the V.C. in recognition of a deed of extraordinary bravery. Taken by surprise by the enemy, the now famous "L" battery fought their guns until only one remained, and the three men who became the V.C. heroes were the sole survivors of the battery working the gun. The story may be briefly told thus :

The battery was waiting for the order to retire ; it was limbered up ready to move at a moment's notice. There was a thick mist, and when it lifted the battery was suddenly subjected to a terrible fire from the ridge which they had supposed to be occupied by the French, but which was now occupied by the Germans. The first burst of fire killed nearly all the horses of the British gun teams, which made it impossible to retire with the guns, so the men, splendidly directed by their commanding officer, Captain Bradbury, unlimbered and began to reply to the German fire. Many of the gunners had been killed during the first few moments. Those remaining coolly replied with such good effect that one by one the German guns were put out of action. So terribly outnumbered were the British gunners that in a short time two out of the three of their guns in action had been

silenced, and only one remained to defend the position. Officers and men went on serving this one remaining British gun till all were killed or wounded with the exception of three. At last they had put all the German guns out of action but one, and then an exciting duel began, till at last behind the shelter of their gun the three were found by a strong force of cavalry and infantry which had come to their rescue.

## CHAPTER VII

### BATTLES OF MEAUX AND THE MARNE

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,  
Or close the wall up with our English dead !  
. . . Teach them how to war ! And you, good yeomen,  
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here  
The mettle of your pasture . . .  
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start.  
The game's afoot : Follow your spirit !

SHAKESPEARE.

Right well fought all the Frenchmen who fought for  
France to-day,  
And many a lordly banner God gave them for a prey.

MACAULAY.

**Y**OU all know what it is to be in a hurry. You have all said on some occasion or other, " I must get that done quickly or I shan't be able to do it at all." It is an anxious, worrying mood. Well, the Germans, when they started on this war, were one and all of them in that kind of mood. They all knew, from the Kaiser to the humblest soldier, that time was all-important in the French campaign. I think you will guess at once why this was so, but in case you have already

forgotten, I may remind you that it was owing to the fact that the Germans have to fight in this great war, which they themselves provoked, not only the French and the British, but also the Russians. You know that this was their excuse for breaking their word of honour, and rushing through Belgium. This was also the reason why they made that astonishing, and we must admit, that magnificent rush towards Paris during our retreat from Mons.

But all the time they were pushing forward, deep in the heart of every German soldier there must have echoed the dreaded tramp of the Russian legions. The poet Marvell expressed in exquisite English exactly what the enemy must have been feeling during the whole of the French campaign :

“ But at my back I always hear  
Time’s wingèd chariot hurrying near.”

A retreat, in ordinary language, means a falling back. There are, however, many ways of falling back ; indeed, as in everything else, there is a right way and a wrong way. Sir John French’s gallant army, and the French forces under General Joffre, accomplished their retreat in

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the right way. Although at the time the enemy was quite unaware of it, everything was done according to a well-thought-out and careful plan ; and, as you have seen, while this falling back movement was going on, our retreating army constantly turned, harried, and even forced back the advancing enemy.

The object of the Germans may be told very shortly. It was to reach Paris, to enter that great city in the guise of conquerors, conclude a hasty peace with France, and then rush back by train and motor lorry to fight the Russians. It will interest you to know how and why this plan miscarried.

What I am going to tell you illustrates the soundness of the wise old saying, "Speech is silvern, silence is golden." Even Paris remained all unknowing of the clever plan formed by the Allies. That great and beautiful city believed herself to be doomed. The awful fate of the inhabitants of Louvain was thought by many Parisians to be the forerunner of what would happen to themselves. The French Government, that is the President and his Ministers, left the capital for the distant town of Bordeaux, and orders were given that all those inhabitants



of Paris who had babies and little children should leave the city.

Though to the great majority of French people Paris is in a sense the capital of the civilised world, the nation made up its mind to sacrifice this beloved and beautiful city if the good of the country as a whole required it. They did not say anything of their resolve. They simply made it, and waited grimly for the end.

At last the German Army was within a day's march of Paris. Pretty American girls who had acquaintances among the German officers actually received letters from them arranging to come to tea with them ! Every soldier in the great German Army believed that in twenty-four hours he would be comfortably resting in the most luxurious quarters in Europe.

Then suddenly, it will never be known exactly how, but probably through their clever airmen, the enemy's commanders learnt that, hidden safely in the Palace of Versailles and under the great trees of the park surrounding that palace, was a new French army of fresh troops. Had the Germans penetrated into Paris, this army would have cut off their retreat and caught them, according to the proverbial saying, " like rats in a trap." So it was

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that, instead of making their triumphal entry into Paris, the rushing, on-coming hosts swerved to one side, and very soon there developed close to Paris the great fights which will live in history under the names of the Battle of Meaux and the Battle of the Marne.

Superior people rather despise those who believe in omens, but sometimes even the holy and the learned find great comfort in them.

The most notable scholars in France belong to the Academy of Inscriptions in Paris. Now, in spite of the fact that war was raging and the enemy close to the gates of their city, these learned men decided to hold their usual monthly meeting. The proceedings opened with the statement that there had just been presented to the Louvre a Greek statue of surpassing charm and interest, the first gift made to the Louvre Museum since the outbreak of the war. After a short pause, the speaker added the words, "Gentlemen, the statue is that of the Winged Victory." And all these grave old scholars rose to their feet and cheered the omen to the echo!

It was near Meaux that the German Army, commanded by the skilful and resourceful General von Kluck, seems

to have met quite unexpectedly the large reserves of men—perhaps it is a mistake to call them an army—which had been brought up there by General Joffre. There are certain other notable facts about this battle which make me wish you should specially remember it, and that though its glories were somewhat dimmed by the greater and more important Battle of the Marne.

The Battle of Meaux turned the tide of the first German campaign. By a strange irony of fate, Von Kluck seems to have first got wind of the new French army on September 1. It was on September 2, 1870, that the Battle of Sedan was fought, the French suffering a crushing defeat at the hands of the Germans. The Germans confidently expected to enter Paris again on September 2, 1914, and celebrate there the anniversary of their great triumph. Not only was this confident expectation disappointed, but it was on that very day that they were forced to begin their retreat.

Before I begin to tell you of some of the deeds of valour and heroism performed during these two battles, I should like to tell you one or two interesting things about the town of Meaux.

Bossuet, who spoke so beautifully that, like St. Chrysostom, he was called “the golden mouthed,” was Archbishop of Meaux ; he was also a brave and fearless man, and one of those who leave the world in which they live—in his case, a brilliant, frivolous, selfish world—better than they find it.

The present Bishop of Meaux is a worthy successor to Bossuet. When the Germans entered the town, the bishop was the only man of authority who remained at his post. The Mayor had advised the inhabitants to leave as soon as the Germans drew near. He and the other officials all went. The bishop refused to join them, saying, “My duty is here. I do not think the enemy will harm me, but if they do, God’s will be done. I cannot leave my cathedral. I cannot leave those of my flock who remain.”

When the Germans arrived, the bishop parleyed with their commanding officer and exacted a promise that his men should behave well. And they did. So we may well exclaim, “Bravo, brave bishop !”

In a little town close to Meaux called Château-Thierry, where much fighting took place, was the cheerful home of another Frenchman whose name some of you certainly

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know. I mean La Fontaine, who wrote the delightful animal fables. The hotels of Château-Thierry are very happily and appropriately named: they are called The Elephant, The Giraffe, and The Swan. The poor Giraffe was battered all to bits during the great battle, I am sorry to say, by the shells of the French, who with their help successfully dislodged the Germans. But the owner of the Giraffe is such an unselfish patriot that when showing his wounded house to an English gentleman after the battle, he exclaimed, "See how splendidly true our gunners' aim was!" pointing out with pride that every single window had been neatly smashed.

I think most of you will envy the two Eton boys who were on a bicycle tour in France when the war broke out, and who, when the tide began to turn, suddenly found themselves in the fighting zone! By luck more than anything else they stumbled on to the French General Staff, and there came across an English officer. Both implored him to help them to get into the French Army, and, amazing to tell, they were both made honorary sub-lieutenants. Soon they were put on the Commission which had the business of examining the villages improperly devastated by the enemy, for sad to say, as soon as the Germans began

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to get the worst of it, they wreaked their vengeance on the innocent inhabitants of the villages and small towns through which they were retreating.

Mean people always suspect others of being as mean as themselves. The Germans believe that the taking of an unfair advantage is quite the right thing to do in war. But in the end these practices recoil on their doers and keep them in a miserable state of constant fear and suspicion.

A worthy French priest and two innocent little boys very nearly fell a victim to the enemy's terrors. The Germans were having a rest in a village, when their commander noticed that the church clock was stopped. He sent for the priest, and demanded that the clock should be set going again. The curé, accompanied by two of his choir boys, went to wind it up; and as was natural, when once it was wound up it began to strike. The German commander, in a great fright, decided that this was a dodge invented by the curé to warn the French that a number of weary Germans were in his village. At once he had him arrested, and the two little boys as well. Without more ado all three were sentenced to be shot the next morning.

All three were brave, but we can imagine what a sad night they must have spent, and how especially sad the old priest must have been that, owing to the fact that he had allowed the two lads to accompany him, they were to have their young lives cut short in such a dreadful way. Early in the morning, an hour before they were to have been executed, the news reached the Germans that the French were on them. They rushed out of the village, forgetting all about their captives. Meanwhile, the priest was so convinced that his last hour had come that he himself opened the door of his temporary prison and went to the village green in order to await the firing party, and to make a last appeal to them to spare the two lads. You can imagine his joy when he saw the familiar blue and red uniforms of his fellow-countrymen.

This great war has been illumined by star-like deeds of beautiful, simple humanity, performed, in many cases, by men who were unconscious of their own heroism. One such still shines forth from the Battle of Meaux.

A Scottish regiment was occupying a trench, swept by violent rifle and artillery fire, when two privates noticed that a Frenchman, attached to the battalion as interpreter, occupied the most exposed place in the trench.

“The Frenchman is awkwardly placed,” observed one of them, “let us widen his trench.”

At once the two Scots, paying no attention to the hail of bullets and shrapnel, set to deepening the trench, after which they calmly went back to their own stations.

I expect some of you will envy a certain French boy named André. He lived in Paris, and on the declaration of war he watched with very mixed feelings his brother and most of the grown-up men he knew start off for the front. In France every man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five is, in time of war, a soldier, ready to defend his dear country to the last drop of his blood.

André was only twelve years old, but when he heard that the enemy was now close to Paris, he decided that he must go and defend his country too. So he suddenly disappeared, leaving a letter which ran :

“My dear father and mother,

“I am starting for the war. Don’t worry about me. I have my savings bank money.”

After nearly a fortnight a sunburnt André reappeared in Paris, and told all that had befallen him. It had been quite easy for him to find the army, and the soldiers hadn’t



had the heart to send him away. Marching with them by day, and sleeping in their bivouacs or billets at night, he stayed with them until the battalion reached Meaux. There the colonel began to ask questions. André's soldier friends had to confess that they had adopted him as a human mascot. The colonel sent for André, and although at first very angry, soon relaxed into a broad smile, but insisted that the boy's share in the campaign must now come to an end, and so André went sadly home.

In these days when hundreds of thousands of soldiers are pitted against one another, a battle consists of a number of separate fights, or, as we call them now, engagements. It was in one of these, during this same battle of Meaux, that a perambulator figures in a grand deed of heroism.

The hero of this story is an infantry officer, one who had only just left St. Cyr (the French Sandhurst, and once, funnily enough, the most famous girls' school in the whole world), and who first went under fire at the Battle of Meaux. Looking round in the thick of the fight he saw his major, who was a very small man, lying severely wounded in a field swept by the fire of the German guns.

There were some houses close by. Into one of these

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Lieutenant Gesrel ran, and he came out wheeling a perambulator. The men lying about him, taking what shelter they could, looked at him in amazement. He wheeled it briskly, but without appearing to hurry, out into the bullet-swept open space, until he came to where the major lay.

The men could hear the wounded officer protest. "Go away," he said. "Leave me ; I shall be all right. It's madness to expose yourself like that."

The lieutenant took no heed of this, but picked his major up, put him in the perambulator, and started to wheel it back to the edge of the little wood. At last he reached safety with his precious burden. Then he ran and joined his men in the fight again.

I expect you have heard how, at Fontenoy, the French called out to the British, "Fire first, gentlemen." But the latter refused to fire, shouting back at once rudely and politely, "No, gentlemen and assassins, you begin !"

This famous exchange of courtesies is recalled by the action of another French lieutenant, who, during a sharp fight which took place round a small railway station near Meaux, pursued a German officer into a locomotive shed,

and found him under the tender of an engine. The two looked each other up and down, and by tacit agreement took up a duelling position at fifteen paces. "Please fire first," cried the French officer. The German fired and missed. Then the Frenchman fired and hit.

The last human quality one would naturally associate with war is kindness. Yet it is not too much to say that every great battle, every scene of carnage, is brightened by truly wonderful acts of kindness. By this I do not mean deeds of heroism, the saving of one gallant soldier by a pal, but simple, homely kindness. Such was the following :

Trooper Philippe, of the 2nd Chasseurs, under heavy artillery fire, bullets and shrapnel falling thickly, not only brought his captain in, but after that went back eight times more to take water to the wounded.

A French soldier, wounded in this same battle of Meaux, had with him a dog nestled in his coat while the fighting was going on, as it was apparently terrified at the noise of the firing. The soldier fed it from his rations, and after he was wounded smuggled it in the train which took him to the hospital.

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Our own soldiers have always had a special fondness for dogs. It is said that when a dog once enters barracks he never afterwards seeks to change his quarters.

At Vittoria the Guards made a poodle puppy a prisoner, and it became their pet. At Bidart, when Colonel Ponsonby was encouraging his men to advance, they were delighted to see the poodle jumping and barking, much amused at the bullets which rained round him. Colonel Ponsonby and the poodle were wounded at the same moment, a bullet breaking one of the dog's legs. He was, however, tenderly nursed, and the rest of his life was happy, although spent on only three legs.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
But westward, look ! the land is bright !

ARTHUR CLOUGH.

**A**FTER the German army had fallen back a long, long way, close on a hundred miles, they suddenly came to a stop, and prepared for a new and desperate stand.

Gradually, those of us who were watching anxiously from far off, learnt what the men at the front knew almost at once ; General von Kluck had decided to turn and face his pursuers along the line of the river Aisne. It was an excellent choice. This river, broad and deep, was one of the easiest to defend in the whole of Europe. Moreover, von Kluck was well aware that in days of peace cunning

Germans, masquerading in many cases as quiet wine merchants, had prepared there a series of almost impregnable trenches. Now the word impregnable means "impossible to take," and when our officers, later, saw the trenches out of which the Germans had been driven, they declared that our men would have held them for ever !

It was there, in the beautiful country of vineyards and of the low, swelling hills which surround the famous town of Rheims, that began what has come to be known as the Battle of the Aisne.

I expect most of you know the meaning of the word "fortress." Those of you who don't will understand it best if I tell you that in old days every castle was a fortress. It was so built with ramparts, battlements, and little narrow windows, that every stone of it could be defended, either by archers with bows and arrows, or with men and guns.

Now the most striking fact about the great Battle of the Aisne, which, beginning on September 10, was to last longer than any previous battle in the history of the world, was that on the German side it was exactly like fortress or castle fighting. I mean that the Germans, with

a foresight which did credit to their cleverness, had evidently thought it possible, though not probable, that they might be pushed far back, as in fact they were. They had, therefore, prepared long beforehand trenches and quarries which, from a little way off, actually looked like the battlements of a castle. There, snugly hidden behind natural and artificial ramparts, they were able to keep the British troops and those of our ally at bay during many long weary days.

The German trenches were all ready for the enemy to step into them, but every British and French trench had to be dug out and prepared at short notice. This, however, was soon done, and then there began that strange "life in the trenches," of which so many vivid accounts were written home by officers and privates.

You will certainly want to know what a trench is like. A one-man trench is best described by its other name, "dug-out." It is a large, neat hole, cut so deeply in the ground that a man can stand upright in it without being seen.

There is a great art in digging a trench. When finished it should be not unlike a tiny cottage room ; the floor,

however, is quite unlike that of a room, for instead of being flat it is slightly sloped, so that any rain that gets in may run away quickly. At the side there is a step, so that the occupier, when he cares to do so, can cautiously raise his head above the ground and look round. The best trenches have a kind of roof or head-cover. This protects the man inside, not only from rain and sun, but also from the awful bullets which come out of the shrapnel shells.

It is interesting to know that the shrapnel shell, which has done such deadly harm in this war both to ourselves and to the enemy, is called after a distinguished English soldier, General Henry Shrapnel, who invented it. On the park gates of the ancestral home of the Shrapnel family near Trowbridge are still to be seen inscribed the names of over twenty battles won with the aid of this shell. Sir George Wood, who commanded the artillery at Waterloo, declared that we owed to shrapnel the recovery of La Haye Sainte, on which part of the battle depended.

As to what trench life was like during the long Battle of the Aisne, it was in some ways like playing at keeping house.



When I was a little girl I often played at keeping house with my brother, but as we were very fond of soldiers, and lived in a stretch of beautiful country which was very suitable for *la petite guerre*, as military manœuvres were then called in France, our house was always a tent.

In those days we knew nothing of trenches, or it would have been a trench. Into our little house—we always called it a house though it was really a tent, for the roof was always made with a sheet, and the door was a big towel—we used to bring all the sort of things that we thought soldiers would want. But in these days a soldier's requirements have grown, if only because he has to live in his trench for far longer than the soldier of long ago used to live in his tent.

I think it may interest some of you to know both what an officer generally has, and what he would like to have, with him, when he is in a trench. He generally has a canteen containing a knife, fork, and spoon ; also a sponge, a tooth-brush, a piece of soap, and an extra pair of socks. As to a change of clothes, boots, and sleeping bag, they form part of his equipment. He also has a water-bottle, a revolver, a pair of field-glasses, and a compass. Only

if he is lucky does he possess as extras a waterproof sheet, a torch with re-fills (many on the Aisne preferred candles), a canvas bucket, notepaper and envelopes, and an air pillow. There should be six thick pairs of socks made of good wool, twelve coloured handkerchiefs, four thick flannel shirts (khaki colour), a good wide comforter, and two sleeping caps (in case one gets wet). Any pencils sent to a man on active service ought to be indelible. Valuable, too, is a tiny medicine chest.

Very few people realise what an important part food—good, hot, and plenty of it—plays in war. Napoleon, who was the first great general to study closely the comfort of his troops, would have admired and envied the British commissariat.

However fierce the fighting during the Battle of the Aisne, there was in each trench or dug-out “the dinner ’ush from twelve to one.” The shells might continue to roar, and men be hit by bullets, but out fifty yards behind the trench the battalion reserves had their fires alight and were cooking dinner. Fifty yards of shell-swept ground behind men in trenches is, however, a long way off.

There were, however, always plenty of volunteers ready to rush to the belt of trees and return triumphant

with mess-tins riddled with shrapnel bullets and some of their number on the ground, but with dinner safe for the famished battalion.

I wonder if you can guess what is the worst thing connected with life in the trenches? It is not the cold or the heat. It is not the damp or the wet. It is not even the fact that the soldier, however cleverly he may be entrenched, is in perpetual danger of death, or if not of death itself, then of some terrible and painful wound.

No, the worst thing about life in the trenches is the noise! All day long, and very often all night too, the boom of the great guns, and the long drawn-out screaming whistle of the shells, went on, backwards and forwards, across that narrow valley of the Aisne. Who can wonder that many of our brave soldiers were made temporarily deaf?

And yet, in spite of the distracting noise, a good deal of reading was done, for quite a number of books had been brought to the trenches,

One of the officers of the 1st Hampshire Regiment actually read Sir Walter Scott's poem of "Marmion"

aloud to his men while they were being subjected to a continuous fire. This fact becoming known to a retired naval officer, Commander Henry N. Shore, he wrote the following interesting letter to a paper :

“ Curiously enough, the same thing happened a century ago during the last great war in which Great Britain was engaged. While Wellington’s army held the lines of Torres Vedras, a captain in an infantry regiment wrote to Sir Walter Scott telling him that while his men were waiting for an attack by the French he excited their martial ardour by reciting aloud to them a canto of ‘ Marmion ’ which had recently been published. Thus does history repeat itself.”

The French soldiers during this long drawn-out battle were astonished at the tidiness and cleanliness of their British comrades. Every morning our soldiers did their best to perform their toilets in the trenches, and that however hard the night had been. Each man had a little bit of looking-glass which he put up on the chalky earth, then he got his water and soap to hand, and shaved and washed as though for a parade ! There was no compulsion ; it was done because each man wanted to do it, and knew he would feel the better for it.

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This kind of siege battle is very wearing to those engaged in it. The dogged courage, day and night, which it requires, seems to me every bit as splendid as those more striking deeds of gallantry for which men win the V.C. As a private wrote :

“ We don’t care tuppence for shrapnel, which flies back and hardly ever hits us. What worries us is that the Germans have been turning their heavy siege guns upon us. The shells they fire are no joke. They rip a hole in the ground big enough to bury an entire regiment. One man standing near me was hurled into the lower branches of a tree by the concussion. We got him down, and strange to say he was comparatively unhurt.”

That makes one think of Sir Walter Scott’s lines :

“ Three hundred cannon-mouths roared loud,  
And from their throats with flash and cloud  
Their showers of iron threw.”

It was early in the Battle of the Aisne that a British gunner, already slightly wounded, went on serving his gun, when suddenly down whizzed a shell and severely injured his leg. He picked himself up and calmly went on with his perilous job. The action was then very hot,

and he refused to receive first aid. At last, when it became clear he could go on no longer, he was forced by his comrades to leave his post of duty and danger, but it took two of them to hold him down on the ambulance stretcher !

The Russians have an excellent proverb, " The bullet is a fool, but the bayonet is a brave fellow." The bullet, however, especially when shot by one of our British soldiers, is by no means a fool, as our enemies have again and again found to their cost. The German soldiers usually fired their rifles at random from the hip. But our men are trained to take aim steadily from the shoulder, and so not many British bullets are wasted.

The modern bullet has a tremendous range. Before the Battle of Omdurman a wounded officer was placed at what was thought to be five thousand yards from the nearest point of fire. Yet a stray bullet traversed those three miles of desert, and striking him on the head killed him.

One is glad to know that the latest type of bullet usually inflicts quite a small, clean wound, which heals up quickly. In old days it was thought that no one could survive being shot through the heart, but it has now been

proved that a bullet may actually puncture the heart without doing any permanent harm.

Sometimes—and this is a very piteous and woeful thought—a wounded soldier has to lie out a long time on the field of battle before he can be carried in. I am sorry to say that the Germans often fired on the men sent out to pick up wounded. As an example, I will tell you of the case of a soldier whose left thigh was fractured and right foot wounded in a very fierce engagement. He lay alone among the dead and dying, unseen, and apparently without any power of attracting the attention of the ambulance men. At last he plucked up enough strength to crawl along towards the British trenches.

“ I was about finished,” he wrote afterwards, “ when a man of the Welsh Regiment saw me and came out for me. That man ought to get the Victoria Cross. I didn’t ask his name, and I don’t know what it was, but he was a real good one, and no mistake. He got me up on his shoulders and he carried me right in. The Germans were firing all the time, and I was so near finished that I wanted him to drop me and let me die. It didn’t seem right for him to be worrying about getting me in. All he said was, ‘ You

hold tight, old man ; I've got you all right, and I don't intend to let you go ! ' "

Wherever the British wounded passed they were loaded with gifts by the French peasants. Old men and women, children even, brought them the best they had. They would bring the milk kept for the baby's bottle, or their only and much valued bottle of champagne or old wine.

A Lancashire private showed his comrades an agricultural medal an old man had given him. " It is not much in itself, I dare say," he said, to excuse the tears in his eyes, " but I could see it was what the old fellow was proudest of, so you see I have to keep it careful."

Some of you, when walking through one of our beautiful, peaceful, country churchyards, may have cast a sad thought to the lonely graves where so many of our bravest soldiers lie in France. But let me tell you that one of the best traits in the French character is respect for death. A tramp found dead on the wayside near a French village will be given a decent funeral, and what is more there will be women present, not only at the Mass said for his soul, but also at the grave side.

That being so, you will readily imagine with what



reverence and care the British dead who have died fighting for France have been treated by the people whose sad fate it has been to live close to the great battlefields of this war. After each action the dead were sought for, and after their personal possessions had been put aside for their relations, they were buried on a strip of ground called "The Field of Honour." There French and British lie side by side, as you will see from the following letter written by a lieutenant of the Royal Army Medical Corps serving with the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders :

" Poor Colonel Bradford ! I can't tell you how great our loss is. He was brave, and a born commander, but in the twinkling of an eye, while trying to safeguard his regiment, a shell carried him off. We could not fetch him in during daylight because of drawing fire, but at midnight, on September 14, we laid him with two other officers and men to rest in their *champ d'honneur*, on a hillside overlooking a fair river and valley.

" It was a sad but glorious moment for us to stand and hear the padre tell us that they had not shrunk from duty, and had fallen for the sake of comrades. The next day I found some Scotch thistle growing close by. I plucked the blooms, and formed a cross over our chieftain's grave."

In a letter to Miss Rose-Innes, of Jedburgh, Colonel Richardson-Drummond-Hay, writing from the regimental quarters of the Coldstream Guards at the Battle of the Aisne, paid a splendid tribute to a Scots surgeon, named Dr. Huggan. It told how two days before the young man was killed he was recommended for the Victoria Cross for organising and leading a party of volunteers to remove a number of wounded from a barn that had been set alight by the German shells. The work was carried out under very heavy fire, and all the wounded were saved.

Dr. Huggan, who was killed at the Battle of the Aisne on September 16, was a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards. He was a native of Jedburgh, and played Rugby with the Jedforest Club for some years.

The doctors on both sides have taken a splendid part in this great war.

Let me tell you here of an exceptionally kind and delicate-minded action on the part of a German doctor.

In a French town temporarily captured by the Germans, a certain French gentleman lay very ill. He was an old man, too old for fighting, and just now too ill

to be moved away by his friends. There were no French doctors left in the town. Hearing of this case, one of the German doctors took off his uniform, put on an over-all, and pretended to be a captured English doctor, in order to go and see the sick man. He took all this trouble because he thought the excitement (hatred of the Germans by his patient) would be bad for the old gentleman. This was all the kinder, inasmuch as, being an Army doctor, he was, of course, under no obligation to treat people in the town.

I am sorry that I cannot tell you the name of one of the bravest men mentioned in this book. There is, however, one fact about him which can be stated. He is a private in the West Yorkshire Regiment.

This soldier was in the trenches when suddenly he saw that close to the German lines a number of his comrades had been struck down while in the act of charging the enemy. He took off his coat and equipment, and walked over to where they lay under a perfect hail of bullets. Beginning with the adjutant, he made altogether eleven journeys, bringing in also his colonel and nine men. Small wonder that he is said to have been recommended for the Victoria Cross.

During the first two months of the war, the British Veterinary Corps, which, by the way, was first formed after the South African War, had 30,000 horse patients through its hands. Horses, in spite of motor transport, have already played an important part in this great war, and it does not require much thought to know that their supply in almost every country is limited. Russia alone seems to have an inexhaustible number—in fact, it has been asserted that there are no fewer than thirty million horses at the disposal of the Tsar.

Our horses are better looked after than any others in the field. The wounded ones are cared for most tenderly, and are often cured of quite serious wounds. Not only have they their comfortable hospitals, but there have actually been set apart for them splendid convalescent homes. Some of these consist of the fine racing stables belonging to well-known Frenchmen whose colours are often seen on English racecourses.

I have been told that one of the strangest and, in a sense, most pathetic sights on the battlefields of the Aisne was the loose horses which rushed hither and thither aimlessly while shells whistled overhead. Another curious sight is the terror of the birds when an aeroplane flies low.

They swirl about, beside themselves with fright, and evidently believe that the flying machine is a huge monster of their own kind bent upon their extermination.

A private of the Royal Irish Fusiliers described how he and his comrades once went under fire :

“ As we stood up, there was a ghastly shower of bullets, and shells burst all round. Into it we had to go, and as I looked ahead one of our chaps said, ‘ I think we’ll have to get our great-coats, boys ; it’s raining bullets to-night, and we’ll get wet if we’re not careful.’ Men of “ C ” Company started laughing, and then they took to singing ‘ Put up your umbrellas when it comes on wet ! ’ The song was taken up all along as we went into the thick of it, and some of us were humming it as we dashed into the German trenches.”

During the retreat from Mons a slightly wounded Scot, an artilleryman, asked a German for water, and was refused. Long afterwards, during the Battle of the Aisne, the artilleryman recognised the same German among a party of wounded whose cries for water couldn’t be attended to quickly enough.

The recognition was mutual, and the German stopped

his moaning, thinking he was sure to be paid back in his own coin. But the Highlander took out his water-bottle and handed it to the German without a word. According to one who was there, the German had the grace to look very shamefaced indeed.

Our flying men played a most important part in this Battle of the Aisne. What they did, and how they did it, was excellently described in the following letter written by Lord Castlereagh from Champagne. As you read it you will feel as if you were there, watching the wonderful and inspiring sight :

“ The thing that has impressed me most here has been the aeroplane service, a splendid lot of boys who really do not know what fear is. The Germans shoot shrapnel at them, and you see the aeroplane like a dragon-fly in the air, and then a lot of little puffs of white smoke, which are the shells bursting. Luckily the shots are very wide, and so far none have been brought down. One man was shot in the thigh by a German airman whom he was chasing.

“ I watched for twenty-five minutes an aeroplane doing what is called ‘ ranging ’ for a battery of heavy guns. The aeroplane watches where the shells drop, and then

signals to say where the shells are falling, whether too far or not far enough. This aeroplane was being shelled by the enemy with shrapnel, and three times it flew round and showed the battery where they were shooting. The Germans must have fired forty shells.

“The aeroplane, about five thousand feet up, and easily in sight, looked like an eagle, and about the same size, and the shells made a cloud of white smoke and looked about the size of a cabbage. It was a wonderful sight, and if such a picture appeared in an illustrated paper no one would think it was anything else but an imaginary one.”

On September 22 a daring exploit was performed by a group of British aviators. They flew off and made a successful raid into Germany. Flight-Lieut. C. H. Collet dropped three bombs on the Zeppelin shed at Düsseldorf, and as the whole shed burst into flames it is clear that his object was accomplished.

Both this gallant airman and his companion were most careful to do no harm to private or public buildings in the towns through which they flew. In fact, they could have destroyed another Zeppelin shed had they not thought it wrong to run the risk of injuring innocent

women and children in the misty weather which then prevailed.

I cannot help contrasting this behaviour with the conduct of German airmen, who killed or mutilated with their bombs numbers of women and children in open towns like Paris and Ostend.

Some of the most gallant deeds of this great war have been done some way from the fields of battle, and in what may be called cold blood. A fine story of Irish heroism was told by a trooper of the Irish Dragoons :

“There was a man of ours who carried a chum to a farmhouse under fire, and when the retreat came got left behind. A German patrol called and found them. There were only the two, one wounded, against a dozen Uhlans. Behind a barrier of furniture they kept the Germans at bay. At last the Germans made off and brought a machine gun to the house and threatened to destroy it.

“The two soldiers were not unmindful of the kindness shown them by the owners of the farm, and rather than bring loss on them or the village they made a rush out with some mad idea of taking the gun. Just over the threshold of the door they both fell dead.”



Among the most moving and beautiful stories of this great struggle is one that also has as hero a nameless Irish private. What happened was perfectly told by a wounded corporal of the West Yorkshire Regiment :

“ The regiment was approaching a little village near Rheims. We went on through the long narrow street, and just as we were in sight of the end the figure of a man dashed out from a farmhouse on the right. Immediately the rifles began to crack in front, and the poor chap fell dead before he reached us.

“ We learned that he had been captured the previous day by a marauding party of German cavalry, and had been held a prisoner at the farm where the Germans were in ambush for us. He tumbled to their game, and though he knew that if he made the slightest sound they would kill him, he decided to make a dash to warn us of what was in store.

“ He had more than a dozen bullets in him, and there was not the slightest hope for him, so we carried him into a house until the fight was over. We buried him the next day with military honours, but as his identification disc and everything else was missing, we could only put over his grave the tribute that was paid to a greater : ‘ He saved others ; himself he could not save.’ ”

## CHAPTER IX

### OUR ALLY RUSSIA

Prepare, prepare the iron helm of war,  
Bring forth the lots, cast in the spacious orb;  
The Angel of Fate turns them with mighty hands,  
And casts them out upon the darkened earth,  
Prepare, prepare!

Prepare your hearts for Death's cold hand! Prepare  
Your souls for flight, your bodies for the earth!  
Prepare your arms for glorious victory!  
Prepare your eyes to meet a holy God!  
Prepare, prepare!

BLAKE.

**I** SHOULD now like to tell you something of our great ally, Russia, and of the gallant deeds performed by her soldiers in this war.

Valour does not belong to one nation more than to another, but each country, and this is rather a curious fact, has its own kind of valour. The British excel in what I should call the "forlorn hope"—the kind of valour that stood our soldiers in such fine stead at Mons, and during Sir John French's magnificent retreat. The Marquis of Montrose embodied the spirit of

England and this peculiar stoical type of valour when he wrote :

“ He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
That dares not put it to the touch  
To gain or lose it all.”

The Briton never fears his fate too much to put it to the touch—that is why he generally gains it all !

Now the Russian has a singularly splendid kind of valour. It is the kind that faces *certain* death for love of country, with joy rather than with resignation. Never in the history of mankind was a finer thing done than the sailing of the Russian Fleet to certain doom, during the Russo-Japanese War. Every man, from admiral to stoker, knew of the fate awaiting him, and every man went cheerfully to the encounter for the sake of “ Holy Russia.”

This courage of the Russians is part of their grand passion for romance, or what people now call idealism. A great many years ago a writer quaintly and truly wrote in *Blackwood's Magazine* : “ I have seen the unromantic drop like sheep under the rot of their calamities, while the

romantic have been buoyant and mastered them.” So never let anyone laugh us out of being romantic. Too often those who try to do so are in the sad case of the fox who, having lost his tail, could not endure to see any other fox with one.

It was this same peculiar strain of magnificent, romantic courage which made the Governor of Moscow, after having given orders to burn the city, when Napoleon and his Grand Army were approaching, himself set fire to his own beloved house. This great deed will live in the long noble history of human sacrifice and valour as long as the world endures, for it was the burning of Moscow which turned the tide against the greatest conqueror Europe had known since Julius Cæsar.

The Russians are as mighty with the pen as with the sword. The finest story ever written on war was written by a Russian named Count Tolstoi. It is called “War and Peace.”

And now to the Russians this great war with Germany is a crusade, a holy war. They are fighting for their fellow-Slavs, who like them belong to the Greek Church,

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and who if they became Germans and Austrians would be most cruelly oppressed by their conquerors. So strong is this feeling in Russia that it has united everyone—from the Tsar to the poorest moujik—in one great passion for justice and freedom.

The following moving letter from his mother was found on the breast of a Russian officer killed in action. It will show you more than anything I can tell you how Russia feels about this war :

“ Your father was killed very far from us, and I send you for the sacred duty of defending our dear country from the vile and dreadful enemy. Remember you are the son of a hero. My heart is oppressed, and I weep when I ask you to be worthy of him. I know all the fateful horror of these words, what suffering it will be for me and you, but we do not live for ever in this world. What is our life ? A drop in the ocean of beautiful Russia. We must die, but she will live for ever. I know we shall be forgotten, and our happy descendants will not remember those who sleep in ‘ brothers’ graves ’ (soldiers’ graves).

“ With kisses and blessings I parted with you. When you are sent to perform a great deed, don’t remember my tears but only my blessing. God save you, my dear,

bright, loved child. One word more ; it is written everywhere that the enemy is cruel and savage. Don't be led by blind vengeance. Don't raise your hand at a fallen foe, but be gracious to those whose fate it is to fall into your hands."

What a noble and beautiful end is that to this letter, but how one's heart aches for the writer now that the dear, bright, beloved son sleeps in " brothers' graves."

Of all the Tsar's soldiers the most typically Russian is the Cossack. Now the Cossack has been well described as being a man of war from his youth upwards. He is always the child of a soldier, and his mother cradles him with war songs. When he gets a little older and begins crawling about the floor, his games are mimic battles, and his father takes him off to the stables for at least an hour every day that he may regard horses as his friends and playfellows.

At seventeen he becomes a Cossack, and after a very few weeks' training he is ready for war. The Cossack's equipment is most peculiar, and it is so arranged that he can creep along, even when on horseback, quite noiselessly. A proverb in Russia runs : " One dragoon makes more noise than a regiment of Cossacks !" The Cossack's

claim is that what mortal man can do he will do, and a great deal more besides. As a rule he is a small man and his horse is a small horse, in fact what we should call a pony. No cavalryman is on better terms with his mount, and many and many a time a Cossack has given his life for his horse. But a Cossack never allows his mount to know what the inside of a comfortable stable is like; the Cossack's horse has to learn to be as hardy as his master.

Small wonder therefore that the Cossacks are the most amazingly clever horsemen in the world. One of their favourite manœuvres, when on active service, is to swing down beneath their horses' girths, thus causing the enemy to believe that they have before them a number of runaway horses.

The story goes that a patrol of ten Cossacks lately came upon a German squadron who, to avoid a fight at close quarters, opened fire. The Russian horsemen swung round under their horses; the Germans mounted and set forth to capture what they believed to be runaway horses. When they came close up the Cossacks reappeared in the saddle, and attacking them with awful fury, cut them to pieces !

The Cossacks have retained their old, picturesque uniform—not for them the sober khaki—and an action in which they engage recalls the verse of Robert Burns :

“ The trumpets sound, the banners fly,  
The glittering spears are rankèd ready,  
The shouts o’ war are heard afar,  
The battle closes thick and bloody.”

The Cossack trooper has a great deal of that simple, resourceful cunning which is so important an asset to all sportsmen and fighting men.

This was shown in the present war by the adventure of one such brave horseman called Polkovnikoff, who was taken prisoner by the Austrians.

His captors treated Polkovnikoff kindly, and asked him many questions concerning his famous corps. “ How do you manage to unsaddle just in front of the enemy’s entrenchments, and attack them on foot ? Is not your horse a drag upon you ? ” they asked.

Polkovnikoff volunteered to show how it was done, so they lent him a fine horse, belonging to an officer, to enable him to make an exhibition of his skill. Conscientiously and artistically he went through some vaulting exercises. Then, in order to put the finishing touch to one of his



feats, he went the furthest possible distance from the assembled company, and, before they realised what was happening, he had put spurs to the horse and was galloping madly away !

This delightful little sketch of a Cossack officer will show you how fortunate these Russian cavalymen are in their leaders. It was written by a British war correspondent on his way to the front.

“ At Pavlodar a Cossack officer came on board, who will ever stand out in our memory as a great little man. He was clean-shaven, fat, and jolly-looking. Within two hours he had the reservists under his thumb to such an extent that had they been asked to storm, unarmed as they were, a German position, they would have gone without hesitation ! His treatment was paternal, almost to the extent of the schoolroom. He read to them, and he told them funny little stories. Then he made them sing choruses, and wound up by warning them that upon their arrival at the great concentration camp of Omsk they must remember to treat all strangers with courtesy.”

A Cossack never “ retires ” from active service. He goes on being a fighting man as long as he can ride well

and straight. A Cossack whose leg was amputated clamoured for a quick recovery that he might go back to the front. The doctor asked him what he could do in the war with only one leg. He replied proudly, " Have I not still my strong right arm with which to strike down the enemy ? "

All grown-up people hope that among the very best consequences of this great war will be the restoration of freedom and happiness to heroic Poland. It is the unhappy fate of this valiant country to be, as it were, a buffer State. I expect you know that a buffer is something wedged in between two contending forces. India-rubber, which is at once hard and yielding, makes an excellent buffer. Poland is between Russia and Germany, and before the war she had been divided between them. Neither had treated her well, but for many years past Germany treated her part of Poland with far more harshness than Russia treated hers. As a consequence of this, even German Poland now sides with Russia, the more so that the Tsar, very early in the war, issued a general proclamation in which he promised the Poles their freedom after victory.

Poland has been the scene of some fierce conflicts, and the Poles have had the opportunity of performing many gallant deeds. The Polish villagers have also been very good to the wounded of both sides. In one village a little girl of seven years old went up to a wounded man and saw that he was bleeding dreadfully from a wound in his head. She tried her best to staunch the blood with her pinafore, but as it went on coming through she put her hand tight down on the place, and sent her baby brother to fetch an ambulance man.

You will remember how more than one French boy managed to get to the front. This has also happened in Russia. Indeed, it is said that there boys as young as eight years have run away from home in the hope of fighting for Holy Russia.

Touching stories of the kind are being told in Petrograd concerning not only boys but girls.

Very soon after the war broke out, four little girls made their way to a police station. Each had a bundle on her back, each wore a Red Cross armlet. The police inspector was much surprised to see them. "Has someone sent you with these things?" he asked, pointing to their bundles. "If so, you must go on to the hospital."

“ No, indeed,” said the boldest of the four ; “ we have come here on our way to the front. We intend to nurse the soldiers ourselves.” Proudly they exhibited their bundles, which contained bits of old linen and cotton wool. The inspector did not like to make fun of these valiant and patriotic little girls, so he kept them there while he sent out men to look for their parents. At last these arrived. The spokeswoman of the party then turned on the inspector and, with a look of grave reproach, exclaimed, “ We trusted you with our secret, and now you have given us away ! ”

And here I must stop and tell you that very early in this stupendous war, where whole nations and their manhood are engaged, Russia did a very noble thing by her allies. Knowing that Germany had thrown her full strength into an effort to defeat, once for all, the British and the French armies, the Russian Commander-in-Chief made up his mind to create what is called a diversion. Although he was not yet really ready to meet so powerful and fully prepared a foe, he threw a large force over the German frontier.

Filled with alarm, the enemy hurried a big army to meet the oncoming Russians. This successfully relieved

the rush on the British and French, but at a heavy cost to Russia. In a very real sense thousands of Russians then laid down their lives for their friends. Had they not been idealists and romantics, they could not have brought themselves to do it, for it requires a kind of courage differing from every other courage (and there are ever so many other kinds), deliberately to face defeat.

Very soon the Russian Army, completely ready by now to face their formidable foe, showed how temporary had been the check her commanders had knowingly courted and endured.

The Russian peasant is noted for his kindness of heart, and when he becomes a soldier this beautiful human quality stands him in good stead. In one instance four classes of the Order of St. George, which is like our Victoria Cross, were conferred upon a Hussar trooper, the orderly of a dangerously wounded officer, whom he rescued amid a hail of shot, and carried four miles. On the way he evaded numerous patrols of the enemy, and several times he had to swim broad streams, holding up the officer as best he could while they were both being "potted" from the banks.

We in our country did not know at first of the fine things being done in Russia. Many people were surprised to learn, for instance, how very good is the Russian Army Air Corps.

You are of course aware that an airman takes his life in his hand every time he goes out to observe what is going on in the enemy's lines. Putting aside all the ordinary—they ought to be called the extraordinary—dangers of air service, there are times when a great deal may depend on a flying scout being willing to give his life for his beloved country. How true that is was shown by a grand exploit performed by Captain Nesteroff, the Russian Pegoud, one of the first men in Russia to loop the loop.

During a fierce battle with the Austrian troops, Captain Nesteroff was able to convey information of extreme value to the Russian commander. He was resting after his exertions, when he observed two Austrian aeroplanes making their way towards the Russian positions. Aware that at the moment of their appearance a strategic move of the utmost importance to the safety of the Russian Army was in progress, and that it was absolutely necessary to prevent information from reaching the enemy, he took the air and flew towards them.

By skilful manœuvring he succeeded in getting so close to one of the aeroplanes that he was able to fire his revolver almost point blank at the pilot. The latter was wounded, and fell with his machine to the ground, where he was captured. As soon as he had fired, Captain Nesteroff commenced a spiral upward flight, and he was at once followed by the second Austrian airman. Realising that it was, above all else, necessary to prevent the enemy aeroplane from returning to the Austrian lines with the valuable information that he had gathered, Nesteroff nerved himself for a supreme effort, and launched his aerial craft full tilt at his foe. The machines came together with a crash, and descended to the ground interlocked, both the gallant airmen being killed.

I have told you that the Russian peasant has a very kind heart. Kindness almost always implies sympathy and understanding. When the first trainload of wounded Austrians arrived on Russian soil they were treated at each place the train stopped with wonderful kindness and sympathy, and one poor woman was seen, while feeding a young Austrian soldier, to be crying bitterly.

“What is the matter?” asked one of the doctors.  
“Has he insulted or annoyed you in any way?”

“ No, indeed, ” she answered ; “ I am crying because I cannot help feeling sorry to see a boy like this all alone in a foreign country, not even able to say a word in our language. I am mourning over what his mother must be feeling now. If you will allow me, I will take him home with me and nurse him back to health ! ”

And yet this peasant woman, simple as she may have been, must have known quite well that Austria has always had a peculiar dislike, and even contempt, for the Slav race to which she belonged, and for the sake of which Russia is at war.

The following little story illustrates the same beautiful qualities of mercy and of kindness, but this time the hero of it is a soldier.

An artilleryman's battery, after hours of hard work, was at last ordered to retire. As it sullenly retreated, he saw a baby girl toddle from the doorway of one of the houses of the village right into the path of the battery. Amid a rain of shell and shrapnel, this brave fellow went to the baby's rescue, while his comrades gave him up for lost. As he reached the child a shrapnel shell burst overhead, and, throwing himself down, the man shielded the child's body with his own. One bullet passed through



his back, injuring him so badly that he could not regain his feet. But two of his comrades immediately went to his assistance, and carried him, with his little protégée, to the battery, whence they were removed to hospital.

It has been said that every country has the Jews it deserves. Now Jews have never been quite fairly treated by the Russian Government. But during this war they have shown themselves to be true patriots and brave soldiers, and so we may hope that they will be treated as well as they deserve to be in future.

Very early in the campaign a Jewish soldier, named Pernikow, won the St. George's Cross for valour. He was charged with the delivery of important secret despatches, and, though very seriously wounded on the way, he struggled on to his journey's end, and fulfilled his mission.

We must not forget another of our Allies, the country which Russia regards as her small sister—I mean Serbia.

This gallant little country was the greatest help to the Allies, and especially to Russia. She had by no means recovered from the terrible Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913, when Austria fell upon her. But little Serbia not only

drove away the enemy, but herself invaded Austrian territory. Thus she engaged and defeated large Austrian forces which would otherwise have been thrown against Russia.

Here is the story of a young Serbian officer who at one time was well known in London and in Paris, for his father is a diplomatist.

Lieutenant Voislav Grashanin was not only a keen soldier, beloved and honoured by his men, but he was also a very clever and many-sided man. A comrade thus described his gallant death :

“ It fell to our detachment to lead the attack on Iverak and Golo Tchuk. Grashanin was first in the charge, and after a fierce tussle he reached the height of Golo Tchuk and ranged his men quickly in firing order once more. I saw him passing among the lines, and heard him say : ‘ Now, brothers, show how straight you can aim ! There is glory in store for us here if we know how to take it. Who cares for life ? We’ve all got to die some day ! ’ Shortly afterwards the enemy began to fall back, and Grashanin called : ‘ What did I tell you ? See ! A battery is offered us. A battery of our own. Forward, and seize their guns ! ’

“ Just then he was shot in the right hand. He bound up the wound where he stood, and lifted the other hand to give the signal, when that hand, too, was struck by a bullet. This time the wound was graver, his fingers being severed. We bound it up for him as well as we could, for he refused to go to the rear. He had taken off his coat for the hasty operation, and now the bandages were so clumsy that he could not pass his arm through the sleeve. We hung it by one button round his neck, and he went on giving orders as before.

“ We advanced steadily, and again the enemy made a backward move. Then Voislav shouted, ‘ Come on for the guns ! ’ At that moment a bullet lodged in his chest. He fell, but got up again on his knees to command : ‘ The guns ! Take the guns ! ’

“ Our lieutenant was dead when we brought up the guns to where he lay. Still, I think he must have heard our ‘ Hurrah ! ’ when we took the guns. Every man of us kissed him before we buried him, and we dug him the deepest grave I have seen in this campaign. We were very fond of him because of his kind heart and elegant manner of speech. Some had nicknamed him ‘ the Parisian,’ but he was Serbian to the core.”

## CHAPTER X

### OUR ALLY FRANCE

O torn out of thy trance,  
O deathless, O my France,  
O many-wounded mother, O redeemed to reign !  
O rarely sweet and bitter  
The bright brief tears that glitter  
On thine unclosing eyelids, proud of their own pain ;  
The beautiful brief tears  
That wash the stains of years  
White as the names immortal of thy chosen and slain.

SWINBURNE.

Tout homme deux pays—le sien et puis la France.

VICTOR HUGO.

**A**MONG the many changes which this great war will bring about, it will certainly again make true Victor Hugo's touching boast, " Two countries hath each man—his own and France."

For nearly a thousand years this was true of all the gentlepeople in our three kingdoms. Scotsmen and Irishmen might be at daggers drawn with England, but always they remained not only friendly, but on the closest terms of intimacy with France. Charming French princesses married Scottish kings, and you will perhaps remember

that when the great Scots wizard waved his wand, "the bells would ring in Notre Dame," not, observe, in Westminster Abbey or in Old St. Paul's !

There was a Scots College and an Irish College in Paris, and no one in Scotland and Ireland was reckoned a scholar unless he had studied in France.

The fact that England and France were almost always at war made no difference to this pleasant state of things, and now we like to remember that the one place where, till this year, British and French fought side by side, was in the Holy Land during the Crusades. In old days wars raged over years, not over weeks or months, and now and again great stretches of French country belonged to England. I know a beautiful parish church in the heart of France which was built by the British in the thirteenth century—seven hundred years ago.

Those of you who have learned any history must know that poor Queen Mary exclaimed that when she died the word "Calais" would be found graven on her heart, so deeply had she felt its recapture by the French. Not long ago, speaking of the Germans' desperate wish to get to Calais, a great English writer observed, smiling, "As

to the effect which their occupation of Calais would produce on this country, they are three hundred years too late. Calais is not inscribed on the heart of *our* Queen Mary ! ”

Ill-fortune often brings countries far more closely together than does good fortune. After the execution of Charles I, English, Scottish, and Irish loyalists fled to France, and lived there long years of a not unhappy exile. Louis XIV gave them a magnificent welcome. He presented the Stuarts with one of his most comfortable palaces, one, too, within an easy distance of his own palace at Versailles ; and when you read the enchanting, intimate letters of Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, you will see how much the two courts intermingled, and what a constant coming and going there was from France to England and from England to France. When Charles II became king he did not forget his French friends. In fact I think it may be whispered that he remained far more of a Parisian than a Londoner, and you will feel this too if you ever read the letters he wrote to his beloved sister, the fascinating Henrietta, who had married the brother of Louis XIV.

England was very English in the eighteenth century, but, even so, there was constant intercourse between London and Paris. English names occur almost as often as French ones in the correspondence of the famous Madame du Deffand, and the best picture of the French society of that day is to be found in the letters of her old friend, Horace Walpole. Marie Antoinette had many dear English friends, and Englishwomen as well as Englishmen were made very welcome by her, not only in the Palace of Versailles, but at her own beloved Petit Trianon.

So close was the tie then between the two countries that they read as a matter of course each other's books. Innumerable little girls in France are now called Clarisse because of a wonderful story, written by an English bookseller named Benjamin Richardson, called "Clarissa Harlowe." Equally in this country, few, if any, children were named Clare or Julia before the publication of "La Nouvelle Héloïse," written by the Jean Jacques Rousseau to whom I alluded in my first chapter.

You might have thought that the great Revolution would have broken the old connection between the two

countries and the two capitals. So far was this from being the case that there were many people in England who sympathised with the aims of the Revolution. Others, while regarding all that went on in the France of that day with horror, yet felt their affection for France and the French people become closer. An affectionate familiarity between the two countries was further encouraged by the sudden appearance in England of thousands of French people, who, known as the Emigrés, were largely composed of members of the French nobility who had escaped from France on the eve of the great Revolution. Many of them lived in England till after the Battle of Waterloo, and our grandmothers were all taught French, dancing, and the harp by lady Emigrées.

Even the Napoleonic Wars did not really break the links binding France and England. In some ways they may even be said to have strengthened them. Not only were our troops always on the Continent, but Napoleon occasionally made a great sweep of any English travellers he could catch, either in France, or in the countries which he successively conquered. These unfortunate people were what would now be called "interned" in various French towns, where in some cases



they were compelled to remain for years. But I am glad to tell you that these forlorn creatures were treated most kindly by their French neighbours, and when they finally came back to England, so fond had they become of France that some of them used to go back there for two or three months of each year.

Gradually, it is difficult to say why, the two countries drifted apart. Indeed it began to seem that the nearer they grew together in a material sense—the less and less time it took to get from London to Paris, for instance—the less all that was best in French art and in French life, appealed to English people.

One thing that perhaps made the English nation distrust the French was France's constant change of rulers. After France had had a king for a few years she would suddenly change about and have a republic; then would come a king again, another small revolution, and then an emperor! It was during the reign of an emperor, Napoleon III, that Paris became for the first time the playground of Europe, the place where foreigners went rather to amuse themselves in stupid ways, instead of to see beautiful things and to meet agreeable and interesting people.

Then, quite suddenly, there came a terrible day, just forty-four years ago, when the playground of Europe became a battle-ground, and when, with surprise and horror, England saw that the French, busily engaged in amusing themselves and other people, had entirely neglected to get ready for the awful thing, War, which had suddenly come upon them. As a result of this neglect, Germany, for the first time in their joint history, conquered France.

So easily, so surprisingly quickly, was this conquest achieved, that it made the Germans get what is vulgarly called "swelled head." It also undoubtedly led to their confident belief that everything must go well with them in the present war. But France, as Germany now knows to her bitter cost, had learned her lesson. Without spending nearly so much time and thought on war, and the terrible engines of war, as Germany had done for forty years, she yet prepared quietly and soberly for the big conflict which, unlike England, she felt quite sure must be coming on Europe, if only because of the extraordinary preparations which she noticed her bullying neighbour was continually making.

## II

You may know that the beautiful provinces or counties of Alsace and of Lorraine were the heavy price France paid for her defeat at Germany's hands in 1870. But these two provinces always remained French at heart, and their possession by Germany was like an open wound in France's side. Small wonder, therefore, that when war was declared the first thought of the French Government was, unwisely and imprudently as many people now think, to throw an army into Alsace.

The rapture with which the people there welcomed the French advance was changed into terror when the fortunes of war brought about a temporary retreat. The Germans hate these Alsatians, and cruel was the vengeance they took on them. One terrible example of their revenge aroused deep feelings of pain and horror all over the world, the more so that they actually boasted of the act in the following words :

“ The German column was passing along a woody defile, when a little French lad (Französling) belonging to one of those gymnastic societies which wear tricolour ribbons (*i.e.* the Eclaireurs, or Boy Scouts), was caught

and asked whether the French were about. He refused to give any information. Fifty yards further on a battery suddenly opened fire from the cover of a wood. The lad was asked in French if he had known that the enemy was in the wood. He did not deny it. Then walking with firm steps to a telegraph post he stood up against it, with a green vineyard at his back, and received the volley of the firing party with a proud smile on his face. Infatuated wretch ! It was a pity to see such wasted courage ! ”

But *we* know that his courage was not wasted, and that by their ill-advised recital of that little boy's heroism, the Germans inspired innumerable Frenchmen, and Frenchwomen too, to show themselves even braver and more fearless for love of country than they might otherwise have done.

It was near a town called Nancy that there took place a touching incident two days after the outbreak of war.

A French detachment came into contact with German troops ; soon the Germans retired, leaving behind them a young wounded officer. The French soldiers picked him up, and behaved, as I am glad to say our allies always do behave to their wounded enemy, not only with mercy but with kindness. He was, however, dying, and his last words were, “ Thank you, gentlemen. I have done

my duty. I have served my country, as you are serving yours.”

This young officer was Lieutenant Baron von Marschall, son of the late Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who for a few months was German Ambassador in London. He had been, till a few days before the declaration of war, a happy and popular Rhodes Scholar at Oxford.

Duty must have been one of Nelson’s favourite words, for not only did he signal the word in his immortal message, “England expects every man to do his duty,” but the last words he ever spoke were, “I have done my duty; I praise God for it.” The French have some fine sayings concerning duty. Of these the oldest and the finest is, “Fais le droit, advienne que pourra.” “Do thy duty whatever may happen.”

It was in Lorraine that Georges André—one of France’s most famous runners, who is also a Rugby Internationalist, and scored against both England and Ireland in last season’s matches—won the Médaille Militaire (the French Victoria Cross). André, with his company, was surrounded by a large German detachment in a small village. They fought like lions, and he himself at last captured

the enemy's standard, regaining the French lines under a hail of bullets.

We have seen how the German Commander on the fall of Liège handed General Leman back his sword. Much about the same time that this was occurring in Belgium, a similar incident, on a humbler scale, was happening in Alsace.

A Uhlan patrol was surprised by French soldiers. They all took to their heels save one, who fought magnificently until finally overpowered by force of numbers. His French captors, much to his surprise (for the German soldiers had been told the infamous lie that the British and French gave no quarter to the wounded), shook him warmly by the hand, exclaiming, "Tu es un chic type!" a meed of praise which it is impossible to translate. They also showed their admiration of his pluck in a more practical manner, for though they were short of food themselves they supplied him with food and drink before he was taken to the General Quarters.

One likes to remember that in no great war have men had the monopoly of gallant deeds. In this book you have read, and will read, of many such performed by

women. A lady can no longer defend a castle, as was done in mediæval Christendom by so many great-hearted wives whose husbands were away fighting. But she can risk her life, and lose it too, for her country, as the following pathetic story proves :

Madame Favre-Schwarz, of Basle, a young and beautiful French lady, married to one of the richest merchants in Alsace, was executed after a court-martial very early in the war. She had attempted to blow up an important tunnel on the line of the Rhine near Leopoldshöhe, in order to hinder the advance of German troops towards her beloved country. Madame Schwarz met her death bravely, and shouted " Vive la France ! " as she fell.

After this war is ended, and indeed during the conduct of this war, I hope that no one will ever again sneer at a woman merely for being a woman.

Splendid work has been done to help the men at the front by the women of each of the countries—those of our enemies as well as in our own and those of our allies—during the course of this awful struggle. I was told by a wounded soldier, to whom I had the privilege of talking in a London hospital, that what struck him most during the first terrific battles in which he took part, was the way

in which Frenchwomen of all ages, from aged crones to little girls, came into the trenches under fire with fruit and water. This was a true errand of mercy, for during the earlier part of the war the heat was terrible, and our soldiers suffered awfully from thirst.

When the enemy entered Soissons the Mayor of the town had already left it. Accordingly, a certain Madame Macherez, the widow of a former Senator—or, as we should say, of a former member of the French House of Lords—informed the Commander that she was quite ready to take over the government of Soissons.

He assented, and at once she took charge of the police, of the fire station, and of the hospital. She “ran” the town most successfully, and that though the German Commander began by making enormous demands on the unfortunate citizens. He asked for nearly 200,000 pounds (weight) of food, including preserved meats, smoked sausages, and flour, and 40,000 pounds (weight) of tobacco, adding the significant threat that if all this were not at once forthcoming Soissons would be burnt to the ground.

Madame Macherez bluntly told him that it would be just as reasonable for him to ask for the sun and the moon as for all these things. She offered, however, to give



what she could, and not only was her offer accepted, but the town was spared the dreadful fate which befell many places in the North of France.

We can easily imagine this brave woman's joy when, a few days later, the same troops who had behaved in an arrogant, if not in a barbarous, manner passed in full retreat through Soissons !

The French have a peculiar, passionate love for their flag—the Revolutionary tricolor which banished the old lilies of France and under which Napoleon led his soldiers from victory to victory.

Very early in this war a light infantry regiment, closely engaged by the enemy, saw over twenty men who in turn held the standard cut down ; a fresh soldier immediately grasped the coveted trophy and held it aloft, while his comrades ringed him round with dead. So it went on until supports arrived, and the standard and the little remnant of gallant men were saved.

I must tell you what a London lady did to cheer and encourage the young men who were eagerly joining the colours. She lives in a street where recruits are constantly

passing, and she felt sad to see how weary they often looked, and what little notice passers-by took of them. She therefore bought a large Union Jack, and whenever a contingent of recruits marched by she hurried to her front door and waved the flag, thus showing them that there was at least one person there who wished to do them a little honour and felt gratitude for what they were doing for England. In due course she was rewarded, for an officer, before then quite unknown to her, called specially to tell her how much his men had been cheered and touched by her action.

Some time before the British airmen's daring raid into Germany, two French flyers, Lieutenant Cesari and Corporal Prudhomme, performed a magnificent exploit over Metz.

They left Verdun under orders to reconnoitre and destroy if possible the Zeppelin sheds at Metz. The two airmen flew over the line of forts, the lieutenant at about 8000 feet up, and the corporal at 6500. In the midst of a cloud of bursting projectiles they kept on their way, but a little before they arrived above the parade ground the lieutenant's motor suddenly stopped !

Determined not to descend without having accomplished the task assigned to him, he proceeded to volplane,

and it was in planing that he launched his bomb at the shed. A little later, much to his surprise, for he had given himself up for lost, his motor re-started. Corporal Prudhomme also dropped a bomb from his machine. On their return journey hundreds of shells were fired at them, but they reached headquarters safe and sound.

A French aviator is reported to have brought down from the skies a German rifle bullet which he had caught in his hand ! He was flying at a height of about 7000 feet, when he suddenly became aware of a small black object close to his head. He thought it was an insect of some kind, and was enough of an entomologist to realise that a flying insect at such a height was a curiosity. So he stretched out his hand and grasped what to his amazement proved to be a bullet ! It was evidently a rifle bullet that had been fired almost vertically, and had there reached its utmost elevation.

It has been said that this great war has been waged in a very pitiless manner, but there have been, as we have seen, merciful exceptions.

One of these was the reconciliation on the battlefield between a French and a German soldier, who lay wounded

and abandoned near the little town of Blâmont. They were there all through the cold, dark night, with only the dead about them. When dawn came they began to talk to one another, and the Frenchman gave his water-bottle to the German. The German sipped a little, and then kissed the hand of the man who had been his enemy.

“ There will be no war in Heaven,” he said.

Boys, as we know, have played a splendid part in the war. One of the bravest French lads, whose name I am sorry I cannot tell you, saved the town in which he lived from total destruction, and from French shells.

It was at Montmirail, where the German Headquarters Staff was for a few brief hours installed in the château of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. When the first French shell burst, the Germans did not wait for a second; they quickly cleared out. But of this retreat the French could not know anything, so they went on firing. It was then that a brave lad, in order to save the castle, took his bicycle and rode out with the shells shrieking above his head to inform the battery that the enemy had fled.

Surprise was felt in our country when it was heard that quite young German boys were in the firing line, but

O

in the great American Civil War there were lads as young as thirteen and fourteen, fighting. One of them, called John Rhea, performed an act of extraordinary bravery during the retreat from Fishing Creek. He recognised in a prostrate figure on the ground an old school friend, named Sam Cox. Although he knew that he faced almost certain death by trying to help the wounded lad, he bent down, managed somehow to get him on his back, and carried him into safety.

Here let me break off to tell you that German boys have not been backward in helping their beloved country.

At the end of August, Prince Leopold of Bavaria, who is thirteen years old, placed himself at the head of a corps of schoolboys, who not only helped to get in the harvest, but did other useful work.

One of the most remarkable dogs in the world is a French dog. His name is Tom (a very favourite name for a dog in France), and he has been trained to help the wounded by carrying their caps to the Ambulance Corps. He never touches a dead man.

A certain French soldier was struck by a fragment of shell in the arm. With a bullet in his jaw as well, and

a sabre cut over the head, the wounded man was lying terribly alone amid a little heap of his fallen comrades, when he felt a light touch on his forehead. It was Tom.

The soldier knew that the dog was trained to carry to the camp the cap of every wounded man he found, but alas ! the soldier had lost his. " Run along, Tom. Go and find my comrades. Get along and find them ! " Tom understood. He dashed away to the camp, ran about among the men, pulling at their capes and barking, and succeeded in drawing two ambulance men to the spot where the wounded man was lying.

I think the story of French pluck which has touched me most was that of Denise Cartier, the little girl who was so terribly injured in one of the German bomb attacks on Paris. The first words which Denise said to the policeman who lifted her up after the explosion were, " Surtout ne dites pas à maman que c'est grave." (" Above all, don't tell mother that it's serious.")

But alas ! her mother had soon to know the worst, for brave little Denise had to have her leg cut off. When she awoke after the operation, she found by her bedside a pile of most beautiful presents sent her by kindly Parisians who

had heard of her misfortune. Among them was a gold medal, and what do you think was engraved on it? Her own brave words to the policeman, "Surtout ne dites pas à maman que c'est grave."

### III

Before going back to the fighting line, and especially before taking leave of our ally, France, I want to tell you of what was, perhaps, the bitterest blow suffered by her in the early weeks of the war.

That blow was the bombardment of Rheims Cathedral.

Round Rheims are the most famous vineyards in France. All the little hills are covered with grape-laden vines, and when the writer was in that lovely, peaceful province of the Marne two years ago, all the happy peasant people, men, women, and little children, were gathering in the fruit, singing and laughing as they went along the narrow, fragrant pathways cut through the vines.

Rheims is a beautiful city, as old as France herself. Once more, as in 1870, fierce fighting was taking place

there at the time of the grape harvest, recalling the fine lines of Bret Harte :

“ Let me of my heart take counsel ;  
War is not of life the sum ;  
Who shall stay and reap the harvest  
When the autumn days shall come ?  
But the drum  
Echoed, ‘ Come !  
Death shall reap the braver harvest,’ said the  
solemn-sounding drum.”

And death did reap a brave harvest amid the vineyards of France. Not a human harvest alone, but one composed of cherished memories—memories composed of all the French nation holds dear in its glorious, shadowy past. Memories of every figure in the magnificent procession of France’s kings and queens, of her saints, her statesmen, her warriors—especially of Joan of Arc, the beloved warrior-maid. The Cathedral of Rheims was not only the most perfect building of its kind in Europe—it was the Westminster Abbey of France, respected by her enemies for a thousand years.

Rheims has been sung by many poets, but perhaps



the most beautiful lines on the cathedral were written by James Russell Lowell :

“ I stood before the triple northern port,  
Where dedicated shapes of saints and kings,  
Stern faces bleared with immemorial watch,  
Looked down benignly grave and seemed to say,  
*Ye come and go incessant ; we remain  
Safe in the hallowed quiets of the past ;  
Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,  
Of faith so nobly realised as this.*”

It was with a feeling of amazement as well as of horror that one September day the world learnt of the bombardment of Rheims Cathedral.

The interior of the great church had been filled with wounded, most of them, be it noted, German, and a large Red Cross had been hung out from one of the towers. When the bombardment began, an effort was made to move these poor soldiers out, but they were lying on straw, the straw caught fire, and several of the people in the cathedral were killed by the German shells, including four Sisters of Mercy. Much of the floor became thickly

littered with the stained glass, which fell in showers out of the great windows, six hundred years old, which were, perhaps, the chief glory of the Cathedral. To add to the horror of the scene the wounded, terrified by the sight of flames and smoke, began trying painfully to drag themselves out of danger.

As the unhappy German wounded appeared at the great doors, which someone had already flung open, there rose from the townspeople assembled outside a hoarse, insistent cry of "Kill them! Kill them!" For some of those in the crowd unjustly suspected these men of having set the cathedral on fire.

For a while it looked as if the German prisoners would be massacred, but at the critical moment the Abbé Andrieux, a gentle, quiet little priest, sprang forward, placing himself with outstretched arms before the great doors. Behind him pressed forward the terrified wounded, standing, crouching, and crawling—their one thought to escape the fire, smoke, and falling glass and masonry inside.

"Stand back! Don't fire!" shouted the Abbé. "If you kill them you will be far more guilty than they!"

Ashamed, the crowd shrank back. But they went on

hissing and hooting while their enemies were carried to shelter close by.

The present writer is almost as grieved at the injury which was also done to the ancient Church of Saint Rémy, at Rheims, which is a hundred years older than the cathedral. It had already been built some time when Joan of Arc was born at Domrémy, the little village on the Upper Meuse, which was, in a sense, the creation of the Abbé and monks of St. Rémy of Rheims. The Abbé had a very kindly feeling for Domrémy, and he generously gave Joan's father, Jacques d'Arc, a patent exempting the village from all taxes and tribute. This exemption was maintained until the French Revolution. In the registers kept by the tax-gatherers the blank space opposite the name of this parish was quaintly inscribed year after year, and century after century, "On Account of The Maid."

During the bombardment, the people of Rheims kept up their courage, and that even when they had to live for many days in their cellars. An Englishman had a talk with one old French gentleman in a cellar dwelling.

"The one thing that keeps us going," he said, "is

my wag of a son, my seventh, for every time a shell falls, or bursts over the house-tops, he makes some fresh joke, the young beggar."

"And where are your other six sons?" his English acquaintance inquired.

"They are all at the front, and I've heard from them too. They are as happy as happy can be, for, you see, Monsieur, we are daily gaining ground."

This little anecdote will make you understand the great outstanding fact about France. It is that every one of her sons is, will be, or has been, a soldier! During the course of a great war, it is a splendid, inspiring thought that the whole manhood of a nation is in arms to defend her. No need of recruiting there—no need to remind the young men that their country needs them. The French soldier is the French Everyman.

In old days I often felt pained to hear English people, just returned from a holiday in France, smile—even jeer—at the rough, often unsmart, look of the French soldier. These same people do not smile and jeer now when they watch a rough, unsmart detachment of young Englishmen marching to their drilling ground. They are touched

and thrilled—or if they are not, they ought to be. You cannot have smart uniforms when every man over eighteen and under fifty is a soldier—or if you do, you sacrifice the rest of the nation, as we now know Germany has done, to the awful, sinister War god, the evil genius who lies in wait for happy, peaceful, busy countries, which only arm, as France had done, not for attack, but for defence.

## CHAPTER XI

### BELGIUM ONCE MORE

The future's gain  
Is certain as God's truth ; but, meanwhile, pain  
Is bitter, and tears are salt : our voices take  
A sober tone ; our very household songs  
Are heavy with a nation's griefs and wrongs ;  
And innocent mirth is chastened for the sake  
Of the brave hearts that never more shall beat,  
The eyes that smile no more, the unreturning feet.

WHITTIER.

**Y**OU will remember I told you that long before this great war Belgium had already been called for hundreds of years " the Cockpit of Europe." This vivid phrase comes down to us from the time when cock-fighting was a favourite sport among Englishmen.

Belgium was indeed the pit in which the gamecocks of many nations—the Flemings, the Dutch, the Spanish, the English, and the French—battled furiously. There is no town, and there is scarcely a village, the name of which is not proudly borne by some regiment among its battle honours. From the British point of view the

most memorable of these are Quatre Bras, Ramillies, and Waterloo.

The most famous, I need hardly tell you, is the Battle of Waterloo, which was fought within a few miles of Brussels, the capital of Belgium. That was one reason why a great many English-speaking and English-reading people all over the world felt very sad when they heard that the German Army was in Brussels. But there is another reason why many men and women who have never been there feel a familiar and affectionate interest in the town. That is because three of our greatest writers and romancers have chosen to lay scenes of their stories in Brussels.

The first of these was Laurence Sterne, of whose most famous character, Uncle Toby, I have told you.

The second was William Makepeace Thackeray. He showed an intimate knowledge of the Brussels of a hundred years ago in his account in "Vanity Fair" of what took place there before, during, and after the Battle of Waterloo. But those who claim to be true Thackerayans will tell you that even finer, even more firmly fixed on their minds, is the account of Esmond's visit to his mother's grave in the Brussels of the eighteenth century.

It was, however, a lady, Miss Charlotte Brontë, who, in "Villette," which good judges consider the best of her stories, has made many of us feel really intimate with the highways and byways of Brussels. In fact, it is not too much to say that there are many people (the writer among them) who, when before the War they heard the name of Brussels suddenly pronounced, immediately thought of "Villette."

In every war certain men seize on what is called the popular imagination. Three such soon towered above all their fellows in Belgium.

The first was King Albert, who has shown himself the heroic defender of his kingdom's rights and liberties, and who continually shared in the trenches the dangers and discomforts of his brave troops.

The second was General Leman, whose name will ever be linked with the magnificent defence of Liège.

And the third was Adolphe Max, the Mayor or Burgo-master of Brussels. This civilian hero might well take as his motto, "Peace hath her victories as well as war," for his extraordinary moral and physical courage saved his beloved city from the fate which befell Louvain and Termonde.



When the Germans were about to make their triumphal march through the Belgian capital, the Mayor insisted that as he was the First Citizen of Brussels he must ride at the head of the procession. In this way he proved that he was not the captive but the host of the rough intruders. And when the German General Staff arrived at the Town Hall, and, declaring that they meant to make it their Headquarters, commanded M. Max to provide them at once with three hundred beds, "I will provide three hundred and *one* beds," replied the Mayor of Brussels, smiling, "for of course *I* shall sleep here too !"

"You will hand over to us a hundred of your notables as hostages for your people's good behaviour," said the German General. "I will be your hostage," instantly replied M. Max, "and I will provide you with none other." Small wonder that this brave, good-humoured man won the love as well as the respect of the people of whom he was the shepherd.

On one occasion the German General, trying to threaten and bully M. Max, laid his revolver on the table with what he apparently thought was a grand gesture. M. Max, with a smile, took up his pen and laid it beside the revolver. And never was there a better example shown of the fact that the pen can be mightier than the sword.

At last, as punishment for his sturdy courage and his determination to protect his people's legal rights, M. Max was suspended from his office, and put in what the enemy quaintly called "honourable custody" in a German fortress. Fierce were the grief and anger of the unfortunate inhabitants of Brussels, and the Germans soon found that it was far more difficult to govern the city in the absence, than with the help, of M. Max.

The Germans had not been at Brussels very long when it became known that British Marines had been landed at Ostend. They only stayed there a short time, but their temporary presence was a great comfort to the poor Belgians.

Ostend was then simply a pretty watering-place, but that was not always so. The town whose name, as you will see later, was to become a familiar one in this great war, was once besieged by the Spaniards for three and a half years, and it was said that the noise of the bombardment was heard in London! It was at Ostend that the Duke of Wellington, then plain Arthur Wellesley, first set foot on the Continent.

Early in the War Ostend became a place of desolation and distress, for the unfortunate Belgians, when fleeing

from their burnt towns and villages, naturally made for the sea. There was no room in the town to lodge them all, and many of them lived for quite a long time in bathing-machines on the beach. It was mostly from Ostend that the Belgian refugees embarked to find kind new friends and homes in England.

Before the Germans marched on Brussels King Albert and his brave Queen had left for Antwerp, the beautiful old city and port which was, till this war, regarded as one of the best fortified strongholds in Europe.

The King and Queen, together with their little children, had not been there many days when one night the enemy basely sent a huge Zeppelin airship over the town. It tried to drop bombs over the Palace, where the Royal family were sleeping, but, missing the mark, only destroyed a small house, in which, however, a young mother and her tiny baby were killed. This cruel and unwarlike act shocked and disgusted all civilised people. But it seems to have delighted the Germans, who loudly proclaimed that London would be the next city visited. It is, however, a curious fact that during the first three months of the War no Zeppelin flew over French territory, although in this way a great deal of legitimate damage

might have been done, not to women and children, but to soldiers and stores of arms.

At the time that I am writing, no Zeppelin has yet flown over London, but from the first day of the War a great many sensible people fully expected that the enemy would send one of these enormous aircraft over to England, if only to surprise and terrify us.

Now a Zeppelin is a most wonderful thing, and for my part I should very much like to see one. The day may come when we shall journey by air as easily as by road or rail, and in Germany for some time past anyone could take a short trip in a Zeppelin by paying a comparatively small sum.

I have already told you that it is a foolish thing to underrate an enemy ; it is also a rather mean thing to do. Let us, therefore, give all honour to Count Zeppelin, even if he has allowed his invention to be turned to a despicable and inhuman use.

This remarkable man, like most inventors, was regarded for a long time as a dreamer, even as a madman. Undeterred by this mortifying fact, he worked on and on

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till at last he produced the airship which was known as Zeppelin I. It was not, however, till Zeppelin III, just seven years ago, made a successful flight, that the German Government agreed to purchase the ship, and further granted him a good sum of money in order that he might carry on his experiments. In the year following, in 1908, a much larger sum was given to Count Zeppelin, and he found himself, from being an obscure inventor, suddenly raised to a pinnacle as the most belauded man in his Fatherland !

When this war broke out the Germans undoubtedly counted immensely on their fleet of Zeppelins. But, fortunately for those of us who live in London, a Zeppelin is so huge and unwieldy that it can only be started with considerable difficulty, and it cannot alight and fly up again as can an aeroplane. Moreover, it requires an enormous shed for its protection when it is not in the air, for on land it is a very helpless machine. Once in flight, however, it is a most formidable-looking engine of war. It has been said that if a Zeppelin were stood on end by St. Paul's, it would appear at least a third longer than that vast building.

To return to Antwerp. The city has long been dear to many English people, and it is very easily reached from our shores. Perhaps that is one reason why it has been a favourite holiday place for a great many years. When the news came that it was to be fiercely attacked by the enemy, a wave of sorrow swept through our country.

It is a beautiful town, and the steeple of the Cathedral is so exquisite, so delicately lovely in design, as to have become one of the wonders of the world. Napoleon, who was not apt to admire fine architecture, said it was like a piece of old Mechlin lace. Antwerp is a city of churches, and in each church there are wonderful paintings, many of them the work of men born in the city itself.

The most delightful of Flemish painters was Quentin Matsys. He began life as a blacksmith, and the city possesses some fine ironwork done by him in youth. Fortunately for the world, he fell in love with an artist's daughter. The artist would not give his daughter to a blacksmith, and declared that she *must* marry a painter. So Quentin Matsys immediately began to paint, and he very soon painted much better than his future father-in-

law ! In the Cathedral is a tablet to his memory on which are inscribed the words :

“ ’Twas love connubial taught the smith to paint.”

Antwerp has always been one of the fighting fortresses of the world. We must, however, remember that it was far easier to defend the little old Antwerp of the Middle Ages than the big modern city.

I think the most interesting thing about the Antwerp of the past is that Godfrey de Bouillon, of whom I am sure some of you must have heard, started from there for the Holy Land, where he was to die bearing the fine title of “ Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulchre.”

Antwerp went through many terrible trials before this last siege—in fact, so cruelly was it treated about five hundred years ago that the episode still lives in history as “ the Spanish Fury.”

In the middle of the French Revolution Antwerp became French. Napoleon delighted in its possession, and uttered the famous words, “ Antwerp is a pistol aimed at the heart of England ! ” He found it, however, as we believe the Germans will find it, of as little or of as much use as an unloaded pistol ; and in due course he

had to give it up, just as the Germans will have to give it up.

It is strange now to reflect that a British Army besieged Antwerp in 1814, when it was splendidly defended by the French.

War is full of curious, funny, and terrible incidents.

Before Antwerp surrendered to the enemy, everything was destroyed that could possibly be of any use to the German hosts. Among other things so treated were hundreds of motor-cars. Some, of course, had seen a good deal of service and were old, but there were some splendid new ones too. An energetic Belgian officer had them all brought together in a square, and then he set strong men, including as many blacksmiths as he was able to find, to carry out the job of putting the motors out of action. They fell to their work of destruction with a will, puncturing tires, hammering cylinders, and wrenching gears.

Tons and tons of excellent corn were also emptied out into the river, and the cold-storage apparatus of the town, which enabled meat and all perishable foods to be kept for an indefinite time, was also destroyed. All the ships in the fine harbour were made useless by their



boilers being smashed up. Thus, when the Germans walked in expecting to find everything nice and comfortable, they discovered that the town was but an empty husk.

The Germans began to bombard Antwerp on the second day of October, and they took the city solely because they had better and bigger guns than the defenders. The Belgians, headed by their splendid King, put up a valiant fight, and England sent a party of British Naval Volunteers to help in the defence.

Now very few people know about the British Naval Volunteers. They are a fine force, dating from the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It is a curious fact that Antwerp saw them for the first time under fire since the Napoleonic scare, which frightened quiet folk in England so very much more than the Kaiser with all his legions and terrifying threats has been able to do! It is, therefore, the more creditable that our officers and men acquitted themselves so excellently, showing remarkable firmness, discipline, and courage, and that though some of these Naval Volunteers had only been in training a very short time.

As Antwerp fell, some people regretted that this British

force had been sent there. But they were wrong in so regretting. The presence of these volunteers heartened the defence, and in such a case as that we should all feel :

“ ’Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.”

## CHAPTER XII

### THE FAR-FLUNG BATTLE LINE

Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Britain in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought and kept it ours.

TENNYSON.

Then each shall take with stubborn grip  
His rifle as he took his whip,  
And when the Flag's unfurled,  
The clerk shall drop his futile pen  
To lift his well-loved lance—and then  
A nation fronts the world!

ARTHUR H. ADAMS.

**H**OW long will the War last? No two people agree about this, and that however wise, however clever, even however experienced in war they may be. It will be very interesting to see who among our friends have proved right; those who say it will be over soon, or those others who believe it may last years.

There is one thing, however, about which even now we all are agreed. This is that, however long the war may

last, Britain and her Allies will never give up the fight until victory is assured.

This great war has been full of surprises, which soldiers and historians will go on discussing for many years to come. Never before, as I have already explained, had such vast masses of men been engaged, never before had battle fronts extended for two hundred, and even three hundred, miles. Not so very long ago, battles never took more than a week or ten days at the most before what soldiers call a "decision" was reached. By "decision," soldiers mean the complete defeat of one army or the other, so that it is unable to gather itself together and fight again. Even the Battle of the Aisne, which was really a row of battles on a line as long as from London to Carlisle, did not produce a decision of that kind.

Without going into a long explanation which you might not be able to understand, I will try to show how the Battle of the Aisne simply did not end at all, but gradually melted, so to speak, into what we may call the Battle of the Dykes.

One great reason for this singular result, or absence of

result, is to be found in the use of aircraft. In the Italian War in Tripoli, and in the Balkan War, aeroplanes had done good service, but this was the first occasion on which they had been employed on a great scale, and the effect of their employment was that neither side could prepare those surprises for the enemy which, in old days, brought about decisive victories.

Napoleon used always to feel by means of scouts for the point at which his enemy was weakest, and against that point he would throw his whole strength. But if Napoleon were alive now, he could not wage war in that way. It is true that his aeroplanes would find out the enemy's weak point quickly, but the enemy, in his turn, would quickly find out where Napoleon was bringing up fresh men, and would make arrangements to meet them.

This is the sort of thing that happened on the Aisne. Both sides pushed hard, and there was terrible loss of life in numerous battles along the whole front. Villages were taken and retaken, sometimes five or six times over, and on the whole the Allies gained a good deal of ground, and to that extent they defeated the enemy, to whom it was very important to get on quickly.

England and France were not in such a hurry. They could afford to wait because fresh troops were constantly coming up, not only French, but also British, including the magnificent Indian regiments, while the New Army enlisted on the appeal of Lord Kitchener, and the Canadian and the Australian forces, were steadily forming and training, ready to be thrown into the battle. It was quite enough for the Allies simply to hold the Germans, and prevent them from getting to Paris.

There is reason to believe that the German generals, and the Kaiser in particular, determined at this crisis to make a great dash for the coast. If you look at the map you will see that on the Belgian coast, going westwards beyond Ostend, we come to Dunkirk, in France; and then, still further on, to Calais.

Calais has had such a long and romantic history that I cannot help being glad that it has played a part in this great war. The people of Calais are as brave now as they were in the days when the burghers, themselves behaving nobly, gave, as the doing of a noble action nearly always does, the opportunity for the performance of another. Long before the Kaiser set his heart on occupying

the nearest port to England, mighty warriors had fought for Calais.

“ A thousand knights have reined their steeds  
To watch this line of sand-hills run,  
Along the never silent Strait,  
To Calais glittering in the sun ;

To look towards Ardres' golden field  
Across the wide aerial plain,  
Which glows as if the Middle Age  
Were gorgeous upon earth again.”

The Kaiser wanted to get to Calais for two reasons ; one was to encourage the people in Berlin, and the second object was to frighten people here, in England, and to attack the British warships with submarines and destroyers, working from the harbour of Calais.

But a very disagreeable surprise awaited the Germans when they threw themselves towards the coast. This surprise was a number of British and French warships, which shelled them from the sea !

Among the British ships were three very strange-looking craft called monitors. You know well what

a monitor means at school, though in some schools they are called prefects. The word exactly means a person who advises, and to whose words attention must be paid.

The Germans certainly had to pay attention to the observations of the three British monitors. These ships, named the Humber, Severn, and Mersey, are like nothing else in the Navy—I can only compare them to floating fortresses. Everything else is sacrificed in building them to having on board as big guns as possible. They are therefore shaped rather like barges, so that they may stand the violent shock when their big guns are all fired. Their speed is not great, and they do not lie deep in the water, so that they can come very near the coast. They are, indeed, meant entirely for coast defence.

These three curious-looking ships were being built in this country for Brazil, and our Admiralty very cleverly took possession of them, of course paying the full price, and very useful they turned out in this Battle of the Dykes.

You can easily understand that the German trenches and other positions had to be mostly, not alongside the coast-line, but at right angles to it, so that the monitors could fire their shells lengthwise at the doomed



Germans, and so they killed many more than they would otherwise have done.

The country in which the battle was fought is covered with little rivers and canals and dykes, and that is why I have called it the Battle of the Dykes. Parts of it also were flooded, and the German advance became extremely difficult. The British destroyers used to run up the rivers and canals and shell any German position which had escaped the shells of the monitors.

The loss of life was terrible, and not on the German side only. The gallant Belgian Army, though a good deal diminished in numbers, fought magnificently. The Germans, however, continually brought up fresh troops, regardless of the terrible slaughter. And there came a day at the end of October when the Belgian forces found that they were running short of cartridges and shells. It was then that the Germans had their great chance, but for some extraordinary reason they missed it. If they had pressed on, they must have driven their enemy before them and obtained an important success. Instead of that, to the astonishment and delight of the Belgians, they actually fell back, and the golden opportunity was gone.

What a lesson this is in the value of perseverance ! The Romans had an excellent proverb, namely, " Opportunity is bald behind " ; meaning that when you have once allowed your chance to pass you, there is nothing by which you can catch hold of it to drag it back.

You may have heard the expression " the romance of war." Even in this awful conflict, where there has been so much that was frightful, certain romantic facts have come to cheer the heart of the nation. Thus, under Rear-Admiral Horace Hood, who commanded the flotilla off the Belgian coast, was Commander Charles Fremantle. They are both descended from heroes of the Napoleonic wars. A Fremantle commanded a line of battleships at Copenhagen and Trafalgar. It was Viscount Hood who, in 1759, destroyed the transports which had been got ready by the daring of the French for the invasion of England. Another Hood served with Nelson in the Mediterranean ; this was Samuel Hood. His elder brother, Alexander, commanded the Mars, which fought a duel with the French warship Hercule, and he died of his wounds just as the sword of the French captain was placed in his hands.

The British Army never fought more bravely, more doggedly, and with more splendid cheerfulness than during this fierce, water-logged battle. The enemy, even with his great advantage in numbers and in weight of artillery, was no match for our men. The London Scottish, the first complete unit of our Territorial Army to fight by the side of Regulars, covered themselves with glory by magnificent charges, again and again repeated, at a place called Messines. It was at this time, too, that the Indian troops first came into action, with terrible results for the Germans.

It is difficult to select what to tell you about the Indians, there is so much that is curious and interesting. What struck me personally most was the fact that their batteries of mountain guns and Maxims, according to an observer who saw them in their French camp, are carried on mule-back. Being in Europe has made no difference at all to these wonderful people's immemorial traditions. Thus, they have brought all their food from India, and they live when on foreign soil exactly as their ancestors lived. There are thousands of goats in the Sikh lines, and very well they bore the long journey from India.

Some of the Indian troops cannot eat any food over which has passed even the shadow of a person belonging to another religious creed. Some of the Indians, also, can only take their food separately, and as it were in secret. But, with the help of the native officers and of white officers who had served in India, such difficulties were easily met, and these gallant Sikhs, Rajputs, Gurkhas, and Pathans suffered no injury to their religious faith, while at the same time they fought shoulder to shoulder with their white comrades in defence of the British Empire.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the enemy was content only to fight in the cockpit of Europe. The far-flung battle line reached at last from Belgium to Switzerland, something like three hundred miles, and all along there was constant fighting. The struggle swayed backwards and forwards—indeed, for weeks it seemed like a joust between two determined wrestlers, each of whom, if he gave way an inch one day, got back an inch the next.

Particularly violent was the struggle round and for Arras. This quaint town has been described as the most picturesque in Northern Europe. This was partly owing

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to the fact that it still retained great traces of the old Spanish occupation. One square in Arras looked as if it had been lifted bodily out of Spain. Like so many north of France and Belgian towns, it also had a singularly beautiful town hall and belfry. Alas ! all this beauty, including the little Spanish square, was bombarded and destroyed. But, sad as was the fate of Arras, it was shared by many other historic towns.

All along the battle line deeds of valour, of daring, and of quiet, unostentatious heroism were daily performed. Many of our soldiers and airmen earned not only the Legion of Honour, but the Médaille Militaire, which is only awarded for deeds of exceptional daring performed on active service.

Private F. W. Dodson, of Meadowwell, North Shields, serving with the 2nd Coldstream Guards, was recommended for the V.C. for saving a wounded comrade under fire. When writing to his wife on their wedding anniversary an account of what had happened he said :

“ You will know by the time you receive this that I have been recommended for the V.C., an honour I never thought would come my way. I only took my chance,

and did my duty to save my comrade. It was really nothing, but I shall never forget the congratulations and praise I received from our officers, my comrades, and our Brigadier-General. I shall ever remember them."

Mrs. Dodson must have been a proud woman when she read this modest, manly letter, as also when she received yet another letter from the wife of her husband's commanding officer, Captain Follett. Lady Mildred Follett sent her the following extract from a letter received from her husband :

"A thick fog came down, so I sent a group of three men out 100 yards to our front to warn us of an attack from the enemy. After they had been there an hour, the fog suddenly lifted, and they were fired on at close range by the Germans. One man was killed, one was wounded badly, and one crawled back. I didn't know how to get the wounded man back, so I had to call for a volunteer, and a reservist, Dodson, at once responded, and went out and fetched him. He was heavily fired at, but not hit. He is quite all right."

It is comforting to know that the bravest, even the most reckless, men constantly have marvellous escapes. Take

the case of Lieutenant A. C. Johnston, the Hampshire county cricketer. The day before he was wounded, the nose of a shell hit a wall six inches above his head. Shortly after that a bullet hit the ground half a yard in front of him, bounded up, and hit him on the body, bruising his ribs. Then a bullet hit him over the heart, but was "spent" before reaching him. Finally, while he was sitting on the steps of a house, half the building was blown up, and he was not even touched!

You will often hear contemptuous allusions to "amateurs" and their doings. But amateurs have proved, especially in this war, that they often are just as good as those who have been carefully trained to do a special job.

One of the finest "amateur" corps in this war was that of the British Volunteer Despatch-riders. Thanks to their work the generals commanding were able to keep in constant touch with one another, a matter of vital importance in warfare.

Many of these young fellows were just fresh from their Universities, and had no previous military experience, but they showed remarkable dash and bravery while travelling on motor-cycles through a country infested with enemies.

Many and thrilling were their adventures. On one occasion an Australian from Cambridge, while speeding along a country road, suddenly came upon a party of fourteen German cavalymen. With characteristic audacity he drew his revolver and shot down an officer and one man, whereupon the others ran away. Thus the Australian was able to deliver his despatch, which informed a corps commander that Germans were in the neighbourhood, and so prevented what might have been a disagreeable surprise.

The spy service, or, as they prefer to call it, the Secret Intelligence Department, has always been very cleverly conducted by the German War Office. Of the many devices resorted to by the enemy to convey secret information to those whom it concerned, the most curious and original was that known as the sign of the Black Cow.

All over the area of war the French and British troops were much surprised and mystified by seeing rough sketches of a black cow on walls and the sides of houses, even on gates and fences. Sometimes it was a small cow, sometimes a large cow ; sometimes the cow was standing, sometimes she was lying down.



At last a French officer, cleverer or blessed with more imagination than his fellows, suddenly "tumbled to" the explanation. The small cow meant that the road in front was weakly defended. The large cow conveyed the warning that the enemy were strongly entrenched near by. Always the direction in which the head pointed told where the enemy lay. Only when the head was tossed back, and the horns were long and pointed, did it indicate to the enemy that an aeroplane reconnaissance would be valuable over there.

I think one of the stories of plain-man valour which impressed me most was that of a young telegraphist at Lille. He managed to move his instruments into the cellar of the house next to the Post Office. He then went and installed himself there; and for three weeks, helped by a few faithful friends who managed to give him food and water at certain long intervals, he conveyed valuable information to the Allied forces.

Now one of the most extraordinary features of this war has been the way in which towns and villages, aye, and even houses, have been taken and retaken alternately by friends and enemies. When the French had a temporary success the young telegraphist did not come out, as most

people would have done; he remained where he was, knowing how probable was the presence of spies. Thus, when Lille was once more in German occupation, he was able to go on with his valuable help to the Allies.

A good many of us just now are anxious about some prisoner of war, and it is curious how few people know the pains, penalties, and privileges to which the prisoner of war is doomed or entitled. To begin with, the person of a prisoner of war is sacred, and on the whole he is well treated. Thus his captors have not the right to ask him for information which would do harm to his own side. He can, however, be forced to work for his captors. The Germans are said to make their prisoners work at digging trenches and making earthworks, which is not fair, for of course such defences are intended to be used against the prisoner's own side. If a prisoner of war gives his word not to escape he is often allowed much more liberty, but, as a rule, British and French officers refuse to give any such promise. Should one of them escape, he may be fired at, but if he is retaken he may not be punished for having tried to escape.

In this war, Britain has treated her prisoners in a very generous and humane fashion. Those among them who

are wounded were actually visited by our King and Queen, who spoke to them kindly in their own language, and gave orders that their comfort should be studied.

Immediately after what I have called the Battle of the Dykes, came one of the fiercest struggles of the war, that which centred round the curiously-named town of Ypres. This quaint, beautiful, old town was once, strange to say, besieged by an English Churchman, Henry Spencer, Bishop of Norwich. He failed to take Ypres because of the stout resistance offered to his soldiers by a hedge of thorn-bushes! This hedge grew on the ramparts, and proved a very real defence. In memory of their preservation the people of Ypres hold a fair every August, and in the Cathedral is a fine painting called "Our Lady of the Garden," to show that the aid of Heaven as well as of the thorns had been invoked.

One wonders if the Kaiser had heard of that old siege, when he issued his cruel and wanton order commanding that Ypres, with its lovely old houses, and its famous Cloth Hall, should be razed to the ground. Such destruction could bring no military advantage. In fact, the

British held on to Ypres with splendid tenacity, though many gallant and noble young lives were laid down during the fierce fighting which went on there.

Other cities, not less beautiful than Ypres, and not less famed in history, were the scene of awful battles during this phase of the great war.

Tournai, where an important engagement was fought, is a quiet, placid town where are made what are called "Brussels" carpets. According to tradition, the art of weaving these carpets was brought home from the Crusades by Flemish soldiers, who had learnt it from the Saracens. Tournai is quite used to being the scene of fierce and bloody conflicts. It was splendidly defended nearly five hundred years ago by a woman, Princess Christine d'Espinoy, an ancestor of the Comte de Lalaing who is now Belgian Minister in England. It was said of this princess that she united the skill of a prudent general to the valour of a brave warrior, and, although she was herself badly wounded, she only gave in when three-fourths of her garrison were either dead or unable to fight. You may be interested to learn that Tournai is not far from the famous battlefield of Fontenoy, where English, Dutch, and Austrians were defeated by the French with

the help of the gallant Irish Brigades which had been raised by, and for, the Stuarts.

Then there is the town of Courtrai, where was fought the beautifully-named battle of the Golden Spurs. This must not be confused with the Battle of the Spurs which was fought two hundred years earlier. The Battle of the Golden Spurs was won by the weavers of Ghent and Bruges, fighting against the French. Hundreds of gilt spurs worn by the French officers were gathered on the field where British and French have now fought side by side.

Round Peronne, too, fierce fighting went on during the struggle in Northern France and Flanders. This town has had the honour of holding more than one king captive. King Charles the Simple was imprisoned there for fifteen years, and is even said to have been starved to death there. When Louis XI came to Peronne to meet Charles the Bold, the latter shut him up for two days in his castle to punish him for having stirred up Liège to rebel, and only released him when Louis consented to sign the Treaty of Peronne. The town was once finely defended by a woman, Catharine de Poix, five hundred years ago, and the fortress never fell till the Duke of Wellington took it in 1815.

I suppose there has never been before so long a battle-line as that which extended from the sea at Ostend right across Flanders and through Northern and Eastern France to the borders of Switzerland. The armies of the Allies were under the supreme command of General Joffre, whom Lord Kitchener described at the Guildhall banquet as not only a great soldier but a great man. Sir John French and the British Army fought mostly in Flanders, where they repulsed terrific onslaughts delivered by the flower of the enemy, notably by the famous Prussian Corps of the Guards.

It is interesting to recall that among the British and French who thus fought side by side were descendants of heroes who had fought against one another on the field of Waterloo. For instance, a great grandson of the Duke of Wellington was, through his work in the Flying Corps, brought into daily touch with the Duke of Elchingen, a direct descendant of Marshal Ney.

As the fighting grew fiercer, so the number of the wounded rose to terrible proportions. Splendid deeds of valour were performed by the men and women, doctors, nurses, and ambulance men, whose duty it is to bring in

and care for the soldiers who have fallen on the battlefield.

I must tell you of one truly heroic deed done by an English officer :

After an engagement in which the Germans were repulsed, they fell back, taking with them all their wounded except one, who was overlooked. An English officer, having given the order "Cease fire," himself went out into the open to pick up the wounded German. He was struck by several German bullets and badly wounded, but the Germans, as soon as they saw what his object was, also ordered the "Cease fire." Thereupon our officer staggered to the fallen man and carried him to the German lines. A German officer received him with a salute, and, calling for cheers, pinned upon his breast an Iron Cross. Then the officer returned to his own trenches. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross for this notable example of chivalry, but he died of his wounds.

The German soldier is sometimes a more gallant foe than is his commander. A couple of wounded Germans arrived at the hospital of Saint Mandier, Toulon, bearing round their necks cards on which had been written by the

senior surgeon who had sent them there, the words :  
“ These two Germans are recommended to the special care and attention of my colleagues, because they have saved a French officer.”

It then appeared that on the field of battle these Germans lay by the side of a French officer, who, like themselves, was badly wounded. Presently there came along a party of German cavalry, who, seeing the Frenchman, proposed in a mean and cowardly way to finish him off. But the two Germans—believed to be Bavarians—would have none of it, and themselves defended the wounded Frenchman. When all three reached hospital, the French officer told the story.

While our men were fighting and dying for their country in Flanders, people at home did all they could to help them. No one was too great, no one too humble, to support the many kindly and ingenious schemes which were devised.

Lord Roberts, by a personal appeal, obtained thousands of field-glasses for the use of our officers, and then, with like success, he obtained great numbers of saddles for our cavalry. To each donor, whether of the field-



glasses or of the saddles, he sent a personal letter of thanks.

You know, of course, that Lord Roberts died as he would have wished to die—with the Army. It was about the middle of November that he went to France to see and speak with the Indian troops, and there he caught a chill which, alas ! he had not strength to resist.

It would take a great book to tell you all that Lord Roberts tried to do, and all that he succeeded in doing, for his country. I can only here give you the splendid and heartening message which he sent to the children of the Empire :

“ You have all heard of the war ; you have all heard of the fighting forces sent from every part of the Empire to help the Mother Country. Why are we fighting ? Because the British Empire does not break its promises, nor will it allow small nations to be bullied.

“ Now, the British Government promised, with all the Great Powers of Europe, including Germany, that no army should set foot on the territory of the little nation of Belgium without her leave ; in other words, she ‘ guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium.’

“ Germany, however, was bent on war, and on

dominating other nations. Britain did her best to keep the peace, but Germany (breaking her word) marched her armies into Belgium to try and conquer France.

“ Children of the Empire, this is why we are at war—to hold our promise, to help our friends, and to keep the Flag of Liberty flying, not only over our own Empire, but over the whole world.

“ God Save our King and Empire.

“ ROBERTS (Field-Marshal).”

Truly to Lord Roberts may be applied the famous lines :

“ Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.”

You will remember my telling you of the exploits of the German cruiser Emden. Well, early in November she was caught and destroyed by the cruiser Sydney, of the Australian Navy.

The captain of the Emden, whose name is Karl von Müller, became a sort of hero of romance. This was

partly because of his extraordinary ingenuity and daring, partly because he treated the crews of the liners he captured with humanity and politeness. Our seamen chivalrously gave him and his officers all the honours of war, allowing them to keep their swords,

Von Müller was accused by the crew of at least one of his captures of having sent out S.O.S. signals to lure merchant ships into his net. These signals, as you know, mean, "I am in great distress. Come as quick as you can to the rescue." If he really played this trick, I find it difficult to admire him for it.

I do not know whether Captain von Müller is a reader of Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne's entertaining books, but he certainly repeated in real life an exploit of Commander M'Turk in "The Western Ocean Pirate." He added a sham funnel to the Emden, and crept into Penang Harbour, pretending to be a British cruiser. He was thus able to dispose of two warships, one of them Russian.

As winter drew near, everyone turned their thoughts to providing warm garments and warming comforts for the troops. The Queen appealed to the women of the Empire and splendidly they responded. Young and old fingers knitted socks, mittens, comforters, and body belts,

till hundreds of thousands were despatched to the front and to the Fleet.

Always remember that a deed of real kindness warms the heart as truly as a cosy garment warms the body. Our brave men, as we know by their grateful letters home, felt ever so much heartened by these and other signs of our gratitude.

And while we were all working here, French women, Russian women, and German women, helped by their children, were also all intent on providing their soldiers with winter comforts. But thinking of those industrious, devoted German mothers and wives, I wonder if they ever give a thought to those Belgian women who, homeless wanderers owing to Germany's ruthless inhumanity, can provide nothing for *their* sons and brothers, but have to rely entirely on the kindness of their Allies and of America.

I do not think I can end this record of gallant, merciful, and kindly deeds without telling you of the Santa Claus ship from America.

The poor little Belgians, and those French boys and girls whose homes have been destroyed by fire, shell, and shot, are not likely to have any Christmas presents

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this year. Neither are the children of the other combatant nations likely to have a very happy Christmas. So a kind American editor bethought himself that here was a chance for the boys and girls of America. The American Government entered very heartily into the project of sending what is now known as the Santa Claus ship to Europe with Christmas presents for the children of the warring nations, and they offered the use of a United States battleship. It was settled that the battleship should fly at her foremast a large white flag, with a red Star of Hope in the centre, and under it the word "Inasmuch." It was further arranged that the Santa Claus ship should proceed first to England, then to France, and then to Belgium, the German children's presents being sent through Rotterdam.

I want you to try and make a special effort to remember the following deed of heroism, because it seems to me to be in some ways the most moving and splendid told you in this book. That is why I have put it last.

It was during an engagement near Nancy that Corporal Lancaster, of the Coldstream Guards, was shot in the neck. It was a terrible wound, and his comrades dragged him into the shelter of a haystack. "Be quiet," they whispered, "for if you groan you will give away the position."

Lancaster remained silent for six hours.

At last the Germans advanced. At a hundred yards from the haystack they were met by the blinding hail of the machine-gun section of the Coldstreams, and the silence of Corporal Lancaster was rewarded. Still grimly silent, he was gathered in by the Red Cross men at the end of a terrible day, and was soon on his way to England, who, we may safely assert, has never borne a braver son.

As the War Christmas drew in sight, kind Princess Mary suddenly bethought herself how nice it would be to send each of our sailors and soldiers a Christmas gift, or rather a Christmas parcel. Her Royal Highness accordingly issued a touching appeal to the public. It was responded to with great eagerness and enthusiasm. As a result five articles were sent to each man on active service, from Sir John French and Sir John Jellicoe to the youngest private or sailor serving under him. Every parcel contained some tobacco in a brass box on which was engraved, in a medallion, the names of the Allies, the proud words "Imperium Britannicum," and a portrait of Princess Mary.

I feel I cannot end a record of gallant and merciful deeds more suitably than with the beautiful supplication

for peace written by a French prince, Charles of Orleans, when a prisoner in England five hundred years ago.

I have not attempted to find or to provide a translation, for this poem, written in what a boy poet once called stained-glass-window French, is perfect, full of the humble piety and unquestioning faith of an age more trusting and holier than ours.

“ Priez pour paix, douce Vierge Marie,  
Reine des cieux et du monde maistresse,  
Faites prier, par vostre courtoisie,  
Saints et saintes, et prenez vostre adresse  
Vers vostre fils, requérant sa hauteesse  
Qu’il lui plaise son peuple regarder  
Que de son sang a voulu racheter,  
En déboutant guerre que tout désvoie ;  
De prières ne vous veuillez lasser,  
Priez pour paix, le vrai trésor de joie.”

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